狂骨の夢

THE CRAZY BONES DREAM

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translation & typesetting: sana @ shikiganai scans

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

This chapter touches on a strange episode of history that's been forgotten today but that was huge international news back in the 1950s: "The Emperor Kumazawa Incident."

After WWII, Emperor Hirohito's political position was greatly weakened and there were calls for him to abdicate the throne. However, his eldest son, Akihito, was only 12 years old at the time, so over a dozen men came forward claiming to be descendents of various Imperial branch families and therefore elegible candidates for the throne. One of the most interesting of these was the so-called "Emperor Kumazawa."

Kumazawa Hiromichi was a Japanese shopkeeper and Buddhist priest who traced his lineage all the way back to the 14th century Emperor Go-Daigo... and surprisingly, a *lot* of people believed in Kumazawa's claims.

The reason for Kumazawa's shocking assertion goes all the way back to the Kamakura shogunate, which ruled Japan from 1185-1333. During this time, the Imperial Court was essentially a puppet of powerful samurai families. When the Kamakura shogunate collapsed in civil war in 1333, Emperor Go-Daigo attempted to restore Imperial power and take back the country... but his reign only lasted for three years before samurai from the Ashikaga clan seized power and established a new shogunate. The Ashikaga clan replaced Emperor Go-Daigo with his cousin, Kougon.

Go-Daigo responded by creating his *own* Imperial Court in the town of Yoshino. For almost 60 years, the descendents of Kougon ruled as the Northern Court in Kyoto while the descendants of Go-Daigo ruled as the Southern Court in Yoshino. The Northern Court was completely under the control of the Ashikaga clan. Emperor Go-Daigo resorted to increasingly desperate measures to secure his family's future, but the Ashikaga-backed Northern Court eventually prevailed. The Southern Court died out, and the current Emperor of Japan is descended from the Northern Court.

trust me this, is all going to be
relevant like 500 pages from now

CONTINUED
on next page

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES (CONTINUED)

It's said that the Imperial Family possesses three sacred regalia that were bestowed by the gods: a sword, a mirror and a jewel. The Southern Court held these items during the period of two courts. For hundreds of years, there was speculation that the official regalia were fakes and that the current Imperial line is illegitimate. Modern scholars agree that the *Southern* emperors should be considered the "true" Imperial line during the Northern/Southern period.

So in 1946, Kumazawa Hiromichi claimed to be a long-lost descendent of the Southern Court, and he had the geneological records to prove it. He *also* claimed to have the real imperial regalia. Kumazawa became an international celebrity (he was profiled in LIFE magaizine) and built a populist movement with tens of thousands of supporters, so he hoped that the American army would support him in overthrowing Emperor Hirohito. But the Americans weren't that interested in 500-year-old folk tales, and Kumazawa's movement quickly fizzled out. He lost a lot of his popularity when he came out in support of the "Takenouchi Documents," a strange collection of religious texts that claimed that Japan was the center of world civilization, and that Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Confucius had learned everything from Japanese emperors.

Kumazawa's children were cast into shame and poverty. His eldest son, Takanobu, was held captive by the Soviets until 1952, and when he finally returned home he discovered that his father had ruined the family's reputation. He rejected his father's philosophy and lived a modest life... at least until the late 80s, when Emperor Hirohito was dying and occult movements were on the rise. Even today, there are dozens of people in Japan who claim to be lost imperial descendents.

LOCATIONS

Tokyo: The capital of Japan.
- Azabu: A district of Tokyo. Kiba's police station is located here.
- Oomori: A district of Tokyo that was still a rural suburb in the 1950s.
- Kanda: A district of Tokyo. Enokizu's detective office is located here.

Kanagawa: A coastal region that's about 40 minutes south of Tokyo by train.
- Kamakura: An ancient town in the Kanagawa region. Famous for history and culture.
- Zushi: A small seaside town in Kanagawa. Akemi and Udagawa live here.
- Hayama: Another town about 2 miles from Zushi. Has a police station.
- Futagoyama: A small mountain in Hayama. Site of the suicide case.

Nagano: A rural region about 3 hours from Tokyo. Also called Shinshuu or Shinano.
- Shiodaira: An old town in Nagano. Akemi grew up here... but she also remembers living in a seaside village called "Hitotsumatsu" that's nowhere near Nagano.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

TOKYO METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INVESTIGATIVE UNIT 1

OW

SIGH

tug

sip

DAMN IT, I'M TRYING TO RELAX, BUT THE WORLD IS TOO BUSY...

THEY'RE STARTING A POLICE RESERVE FORCE... THE PRINCE'S INVESTITURE CEREMONY IS COMING UP... HM, THE FORMER TRANSPORTATION MINISTER IS BEING INVESTIGATED FOR FRAUD...

NAGATO ISOJI...

HE'S BEEN ASSIGNED TO TWO MONTHS OF TEMP SERVICE IN MY UNIT, SO I GUESS HE'S MY NEW PARTNER.

THE OTHER DAY, I GOT TO BREAK UP A CHINESE DRUG SMUGGLING RING...

BUT I'M STILL BORED...

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, SHUU-SAN?

I GOTTA PISS!

OH, ALRIGHT THEN.

HAVE FUN.

HEY, AOKI.

OH, HEY SEMPAI.

sigh

I'M SO BORED...

whizz

UGH ...

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN A FOUL MOOD.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN LATELY?

HEY, AOKI! THE SECTION CHIEF NEEDS THOSE DOCUMENTS RIGHT AWAY!

OH, OKAY!

YEAH, HE'S AS CALM AS A BUDDHA.

WHEN I HEARD THAT HE GOT PAIRED UP WITH A DEMON LIKE YOU, I WAS SURPRISED!

THAT NAGATO GUY IS PISSING ME OFF.

YEAH, I GUESS.

SCRUB

SCRUB

SCRUB

.....

...I GUESS I COULD READ SOME OLD NEWSPAPERS.

CREAK

ARCHIVES

DAMN IT, WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW...

I'VE ALREADY READ THE WHOLE NEWS-PAPER...

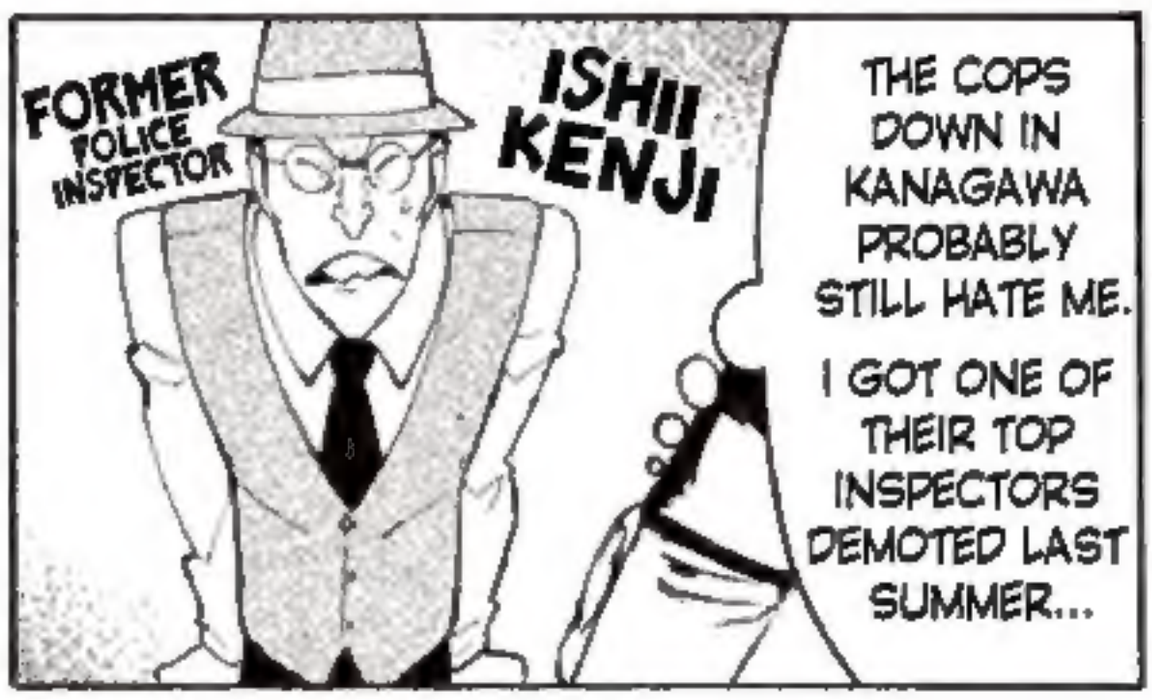
"YETI SPOTTED ON THE KHUMBU GLACIER"

"UFO SEEN OVER WASHING-TON"

Snort

SERIO-USLY?

HUH?


FORMER POLICE INSPECTOR
ISHII KENJI
THE COPS DOWN IN KANAGAWA PROBABLY STILL HATE ME.
I GOT ONE OF THEIR TOP INSPECTORS DEMOTED LAST SUMMER...

September 23rd, 1952 (Wednesday)

Golden Skull Found Floating in Zushi Bay

THIS IS DUMB.
SKULLS DON'T SHINE, ANYWAY.
THEY PROBABLY SAW SOME FLOATING TRASH.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE NEWSPAPER PUBLISHES THIS CRAP.

"BUT IT WAS CARRIED AWAY BY THE WAVES BEFORE IT COULD BE RETRIEVED."

"TWO DAYS AFTER A GOLDEN SKULL WAS SEEN FLOATING IN THE WATER, ANOTHER SKULL WAS SEEN ON THE BEACH BY LOCAL RESIDENTS."

...A FOLLOW-UP REPORT?

Another Skull Found In Zushi Bay

BOR-ING!

WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT.

CAW CAW

LOL

FLIP FLIP

HAHA, THAT WIMPY INSPECTOR ISHII WOULD PROBABLY FAINT IF HE SAW A SKULL,

SO MAYBE IT'S A GOOD THING THAT THEY LOST IT.

UGH

I GUESS I'LL SPEND ANOTHER DAY READING OLD NEWS...

GUESS I CAN'T AVOID HIM...

YOU'RE HERE EARLY, POPS...

GOOD MORNING, SHUU-SAN!

OH!

WELL, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN EARLY BIRD.

HOW ABOUT YOU, SHUU-SAN?

ARCHIVES

I WISH HE'D STOP CALLING ME "SHUU-SAN..."

I'M NOT A KID!

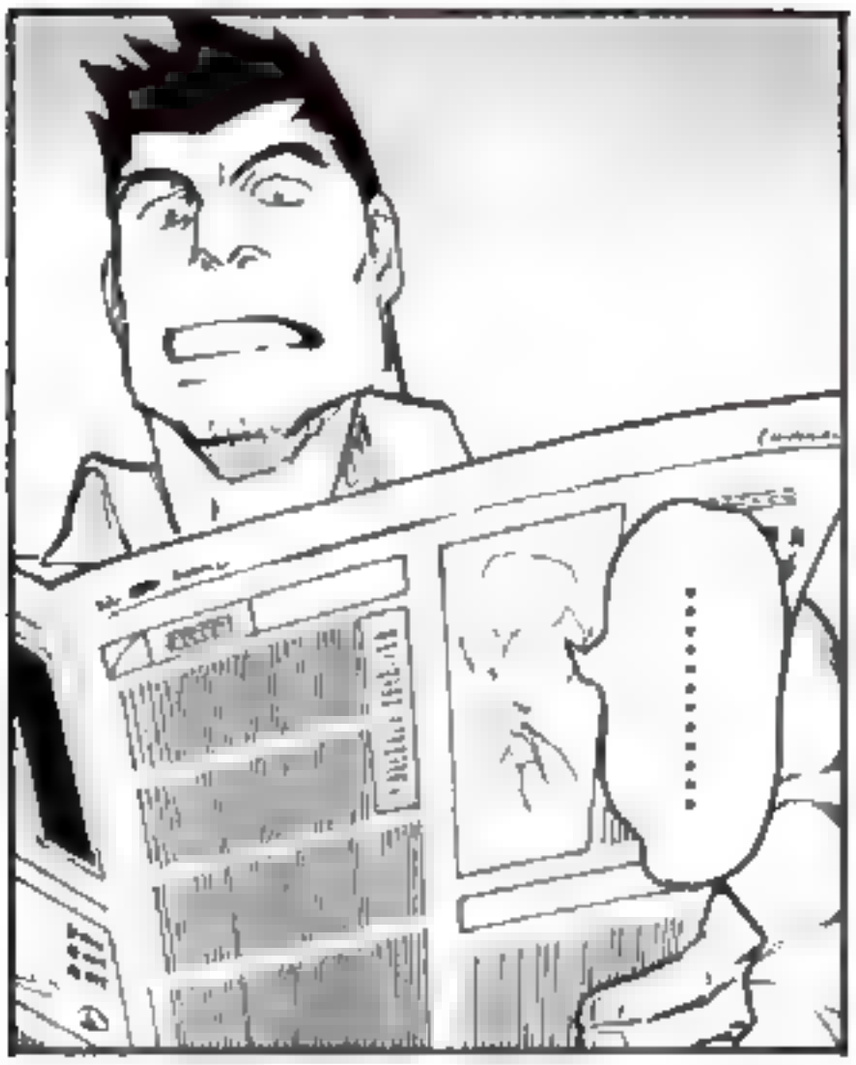
HE'S TOO DAMNED FRIENDLY!

UH...

IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER TO ME.

DAMN IT, I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO HIM.

I'LL GO HIDE OUT IN THE ARCHIVES ROOM.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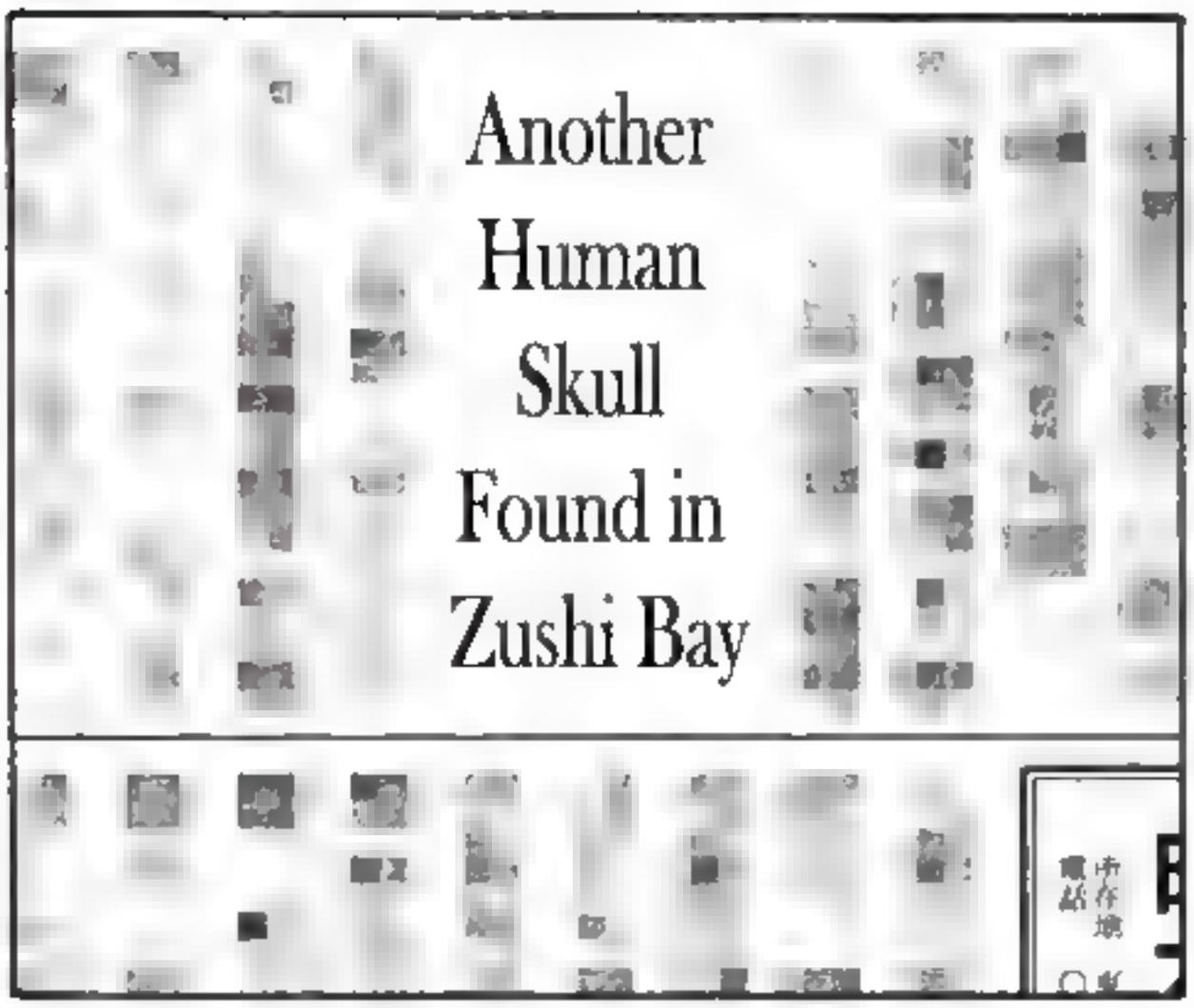
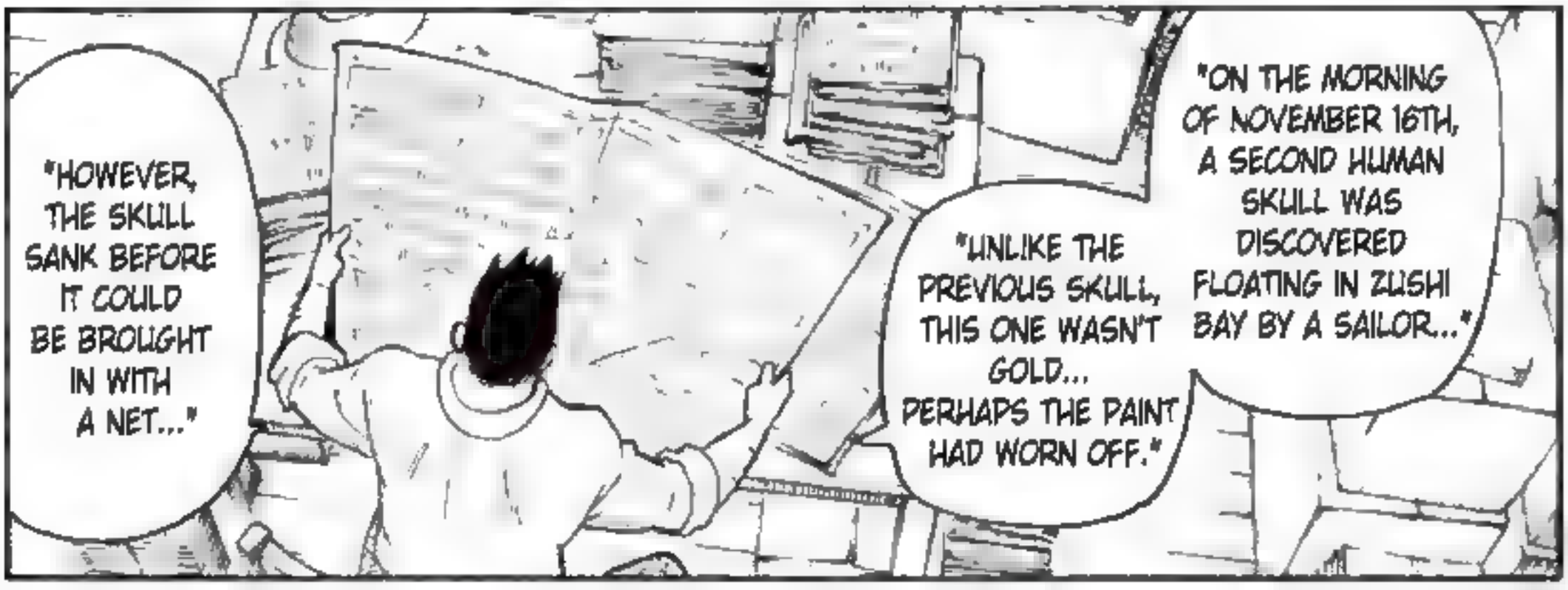

Another
Human
Skull
Found in
Zushi Bay


"HOWEVER, THE SKULL SANK BEFORE IT COULD BE BROUGHT IN WITH A NET..."
"UNLIKE THE PREVIOUS SKULL, THIS ONE WASN'T GOLD... PERHAPS THE PAINT HAD WORN OFF."
"ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 16TH, A SECOND HUMAN SKULL WAS DISCOVERED FLOATING IN ZUSHI BAY BY A SAILOR..."

WELL THAT'S PRETTY WEIRD.
SO THERE HAVE BEEN TWO CASES OF HUMAN SKULLS DISCOVERED IN ZUSHI BAY?

Bizarre Crime?

Third Human Head Seen In Zushi Bay

THE NEXT DAY...

"NOVEMBER 27TH... THIS MORNING, SEVERAL FISHERMEN REPORTED SEEING A HUMAN HEAD FLOATING IN THE WATERS OF ZUSHI BAY..."

"ONE WITNESS THOUGHT IT WAS A FISH AT FIRST, BUT THEN HE SAW HAIR AND ROTTING FLESH AND REALIZED THAT IT WAS A HUMAN HEAD."

DAMN IT!

GRR GRR

NO SMOKING

WHY DOES ISHII GET A NICE JUICY MURDER CASE!?

SEVERED BODY PARTS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS AN ATTEMPT TO COVER UP A MURDER BY MAKING THE BODY HARDER TO FIND...

WHAT THE HELL?

THE FIRST SKULL WAS PAINTED GOLD, BUT THEN THEY FOUND A BARE SKULL, AND AFTER THAT A ROTTEN HEAD.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A FRESHLY SEVERED HUMAN HEAD?

SHUU-SAN, SHUU-SAN!

EH?

MEANWHILE, I'M STUCK HERE READING OLD NEWS...

THERE'S NO WAY THAT ISHII IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO SOLVE THIS...

ARGH

ARGH!

HUH ...?

IT'S IN TODAY'S PAPER.

WAIT, WHAT?

LOOK AT THIS! SOMEBODY FOUND A SEVERED HEAD!

smile

EH!!?

FLIP

HOW DID HE KNOW THAT I WAS INTERESTED IN THIS CASE...?

Skull Mystery Deepens!

Freshly Severed Head Found In Zushi Bay

"DECEMBER 21ST: LOCAL FISHERMEN HAVE DISCOVERED ANOTHER SEVERED BODY PART FLOATING IN ZUSHI BAY - THIS TIME, A RECENTLY DECEASED HUMAN HEAD."

"THE IDENTITY OF THE DECEASED IS UNKNOWN, SO INVESTI-GATORS FACE SERIOUS OBSTACLES."

WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

ANNOY-ING!

TCH!

MY GOODNESS, KANAGAWA HAS CERTAINLY HAD A RUN OF BAD LUCK!

GO AWAY, YOU OLD FART...

Inspector Ishii Kenji is overseeing the case.

INSPEC-TOR!?

BUT HE GOT DEMOTED!

"INSPECTOR ISHII KENJI IS OVERSEEING THE CASE."

FORMER INSPECTOR ISHII

I GUESS HE MUST HAVE BEEN REINSTATED TO HIS FORMER POSTITION...

TCH

UGH... I'M SO BORED.

SHUU-SAN, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE OTHER INCIDENT IN KANAGAWA?

HUH?

WORLD PEACE IS GREAT, BUT I'M BORED OUT OF MY MIND!

PULL

APART FROM THE FUSS OVER SEVERED HEADS, THERE'S NOTHING GOING ON...

PERHAPS THE KANAGAWA DEPARTMENT COULD USE OUR HELP?

WE'VE JUST RECIEVED INFORMATION RELATED TO ANOTHER STRANGE CASE IN KANAGAWA PREFECTURE...

IT SEEMS THAT THERE WAS A GROUP SUICIDE IN THE TOWN OF HAYAMA.

THAT'S RIGHT!

THE PARENTS OF ONE OF THE VICTIMS LIVE JUST OUTSIDE TOKYO.

WHAT?

A GROUP SUICIDE IN HAYAMA?

.....

OF COURSE.

WE CAN TALK WHILE WE WALK.

HUH? RIGHT NOW?

IT'S 8AM!

SHALL WE INVESTI-GATE?

YOU'D BETTER FILL ME IN ON THIS!

I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY INFO ON THAT CASE...

AND AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE ON PROBATION?

RATTLE

RATTLE

NOPE.

BUT "SHINOU" MEANS "LET'S DIE," RIGHT?

SHUU-SAN, ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE "SHINOU-DAN?"

YEAH ....

AHH, IT'S NICE TO SIT DOWN!

YOU'RE LUCKY THAT CHIEF OOSHIMA IS ON YOUR SIDE, YOU OLD FART...

LISTEN, KIBA, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY WHINING ABOUT DETECTIVE NAGATO!

THERE WAS AN INCIDENT ON JULY 2ND, 1933 IN THE TOWN OF HAYAMA IN KANA-GAWA...

A GROUP OF YOUNG BUDDHISTS WAS ORGANIZING A DEMON-STRATION.

死なう 死

RIGHT.

THEY WERE A RADICAL NICHIREN BUDDHIST GROUP BACK IN THE 1930S.

THEY'D GO ON MARCHES AND SHOUT "WE MUST DIE, WE MUST DIE!"

NOTE The "Shinou-dan" was also called the "Shinaj-dan."

SO THEY WERE SOME KIND OF RELIGIOUS CULT?

INDEED.

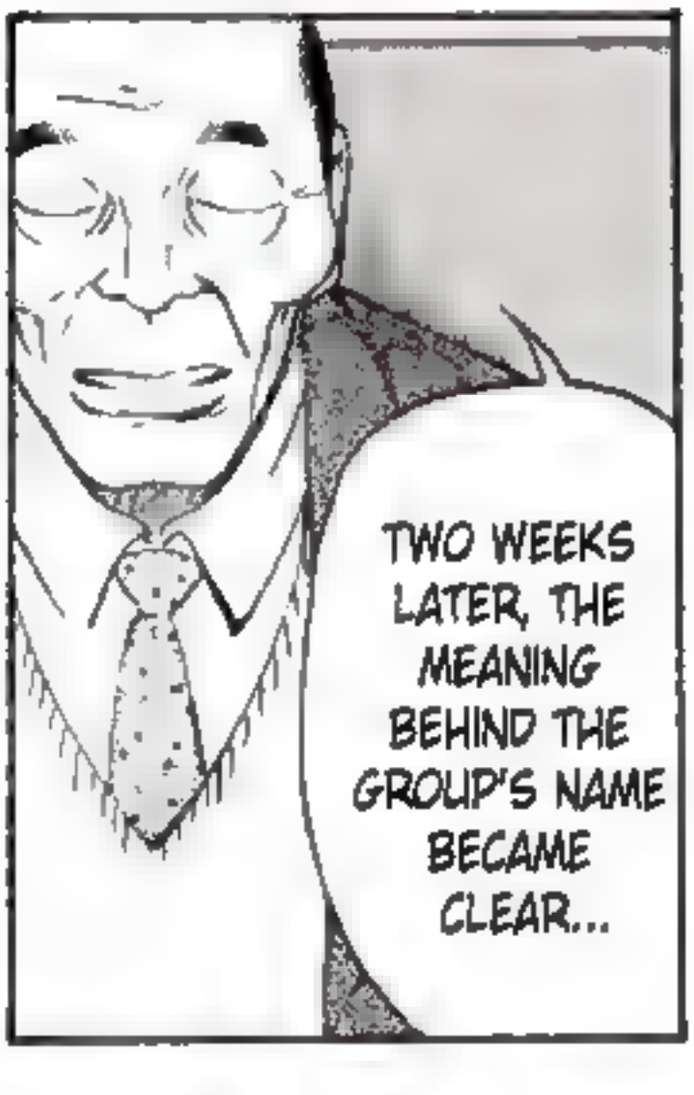
THEY TOOK THE BUDDHIST IDEA OF "SELF-SACRIFICE FOR A WORTHY CAUSE" AND ADVOCATED FOR MASS SUICIDE.

HOW-EVER...

BELIEVING THE GROUP TO BE A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, SEVERAL POLICE OFFICERS PLANNED TO CAPTURE AND INTERROGATE THE MEMBERS.

NOTE The Shinou-dan was a real group in the 1930s. Extreme nationalist groups were on the rise in the years before WWII, and occasionally they fused with apocalyptic Buddhist cults. It's debatable whether the Shinou-dan *actually* planned to carry out murder, but a similar ultranationalist Buddhist group, the Ketsumeidan ("League of Blood"), did succeed in killing two liberal-leaning political figures. So the Shinou-dan were seen as a genuine threat.

Terror Strikes
DECLARATION
FOR THE SAKE OF OUR COUNTRY, WE MUST DIE!!
FOR THE SAKE OF OUR PRINCIPLES, WE MUST DI
FOR THE S
OF OUR R
WE MUS
FOR THE
OUR LE
WE MUS
OF COURSE, MOST OF THE REPORTS WERE VERY SENSATION-ALIZED.
Will the monks who burned Zoujouji Temple face execution?
Terrorism? Or Heresy?
Bizarre Black-Robed Cult Causes Panic
Radical Buddhist Youth Group
IT WAS ALL OVER THE NEWSPAPERS AT THE TIME.
THEY PLANNED TO ASSASSINATE A FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND SEVERAL RELGIOUS LEADERS, AND THEN BURN THEIR TEMPLE TO THE GROUND...
Shinau-Dan
Coup Conspiracy
New evidence indicates that the terrorist group was seeking to wipe out possible opposition. Former Prime Minister and the head of Nishizone Temple were intended targets
INSIDE THE SHINOU-DAN DEATH CULT
"We were willing to die for our great leader."



ON FEBRUARY 10TH, 1937, AT NOON, INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN FRONT OF SEVERAL PUBLIC BUILDINGS...

WELL ...

THE MEMBERS WERE EVENTUALLY RELEASED DUE TO LACK OF EVIDENCE.

BUT I'M AFRAID THE STORY NEVER WENT ANYWHERE.

MAYBE THAT SENILE OLD FART FORGOT HOW IT ENDED...

HMPH.

AND THEN WHAT?

WE MUST DIE!!

WE MUST DIE!!

WE MUST DIE!!

WE MUST DIE!!

WE MUST DIE!!

WE MUST DIE!!

WE MUST DIE!!

SFX: *stab*

NO!!

THEY ALL CHOSE TO DIE...

WE TRIED TALKING SENSE INTO THEM, BUT...

IT TURNED OUT THAT THE LEADER OF THE GROUP HAD DIED DUE TO DISEASE, SO THE NEXT DAY, THE OTHER MEMBERS COMMITTED SUICIDE VIA POTASSIUM CYANIDE OR DISEMBOWELMENT.

I WATCHED A YOUNG MAN DIE RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME...

HIS NAME WAS OUKA.

.....

THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN SAY TO THEM...

WHO KNOWS ...

FANATICISM MAKES PEOPLE DO STRANGE THINGS.

WHY WOULD A BUNCH OF KIDS WANT TO DIE?

I DON'T GET IT...

TCH. BUT THAT WAS DECADES AGO.

FLOP

SO WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE NEW GROUP SUICIDE INCIDENT, OF COURSE I THOUGHT OF THE SHINOU-DAN CASE.

IT DOESN'T SOUND *THAT* SIMILAR.

SEPTEMBER 20TH: A GROUP SUICIDE ON FUTAGOYAMA MOUNTAIN IN THE TOWN OF HAYAMA...

INDEED, BUT THIS CASE IS STRIKINGLY SIMILAR, ISN'T IT?

INVESTI-GATORS DISCOVERED THE CORPSES OF TEN MEN AND WOMEN...

THE WOMEN HAD ALL BEEN DRUGGED WITH OPIUM.

WELL, I DON'T KNOW...

BUT...

SO WHY DID THOSE TEN PEOPLE DIE?

WERE THEY PART OF SOME SHINOU-DAN REVIVAL?

Found Dead on Futagoyama Mountain: Was it Suicide? Or Murder?

BUT IT'S OUTSIDE OUR JURIS-DICTION.

I THINK I READ ABOUT THAT...

SO IT WAS REALLY A MURDER-SUICIDE...

BUT?

AND THE GOLDEN SKULL INCIDENT HAPPENED AT AROUND THE SAME TIME...

THEY MUST HAVE OVER-LOOKED IT.

ISHII AND THE KANAGAWA POLICE DEPARTMENT MUST HAVE BEEN BUSY WITH THE CASE IN MUSASHINO...

SHIT ...

ON THE HANDLE OF THE KNIFE USED IN THE SUICIDES...

THERE WAS A CHRYSAN-THEMUM CREST.

IT DOES SEEM LIKELY.

SO THEY WERE SOME KIND OF RIGHT-WING GROUP?

NOTE The chrysanthemum crest is a symbol of the Emperor of Japan, so it's often used by right-wing nationalist groups. The Japanese right wing is strongly associated with organized crime, too.

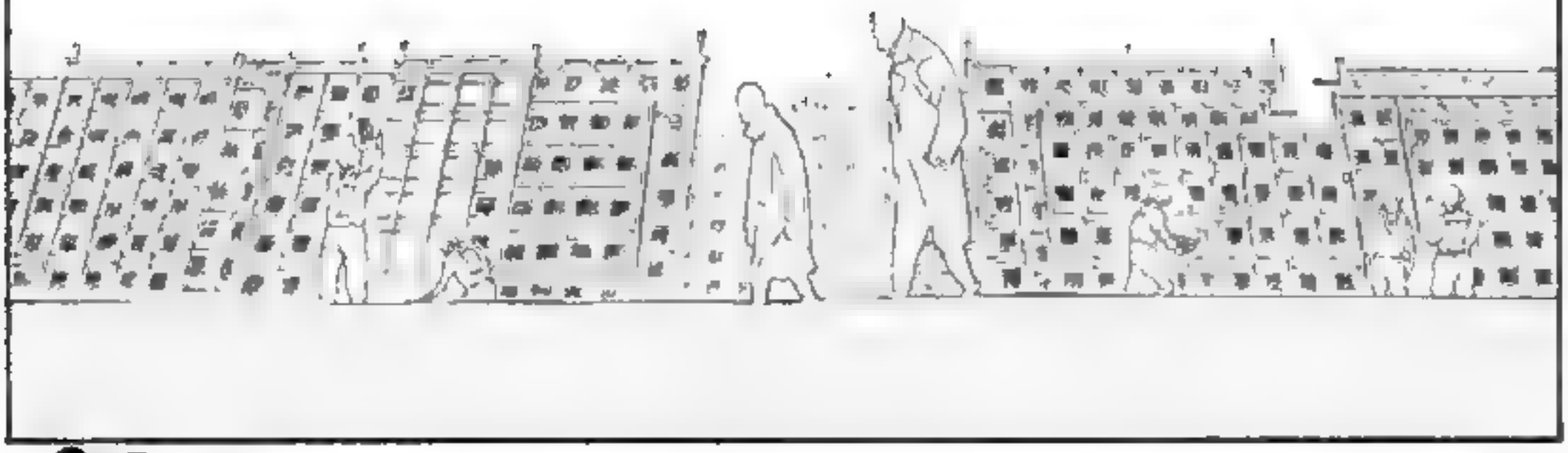
.....

A CHRYSAN-THEMUM CREST...

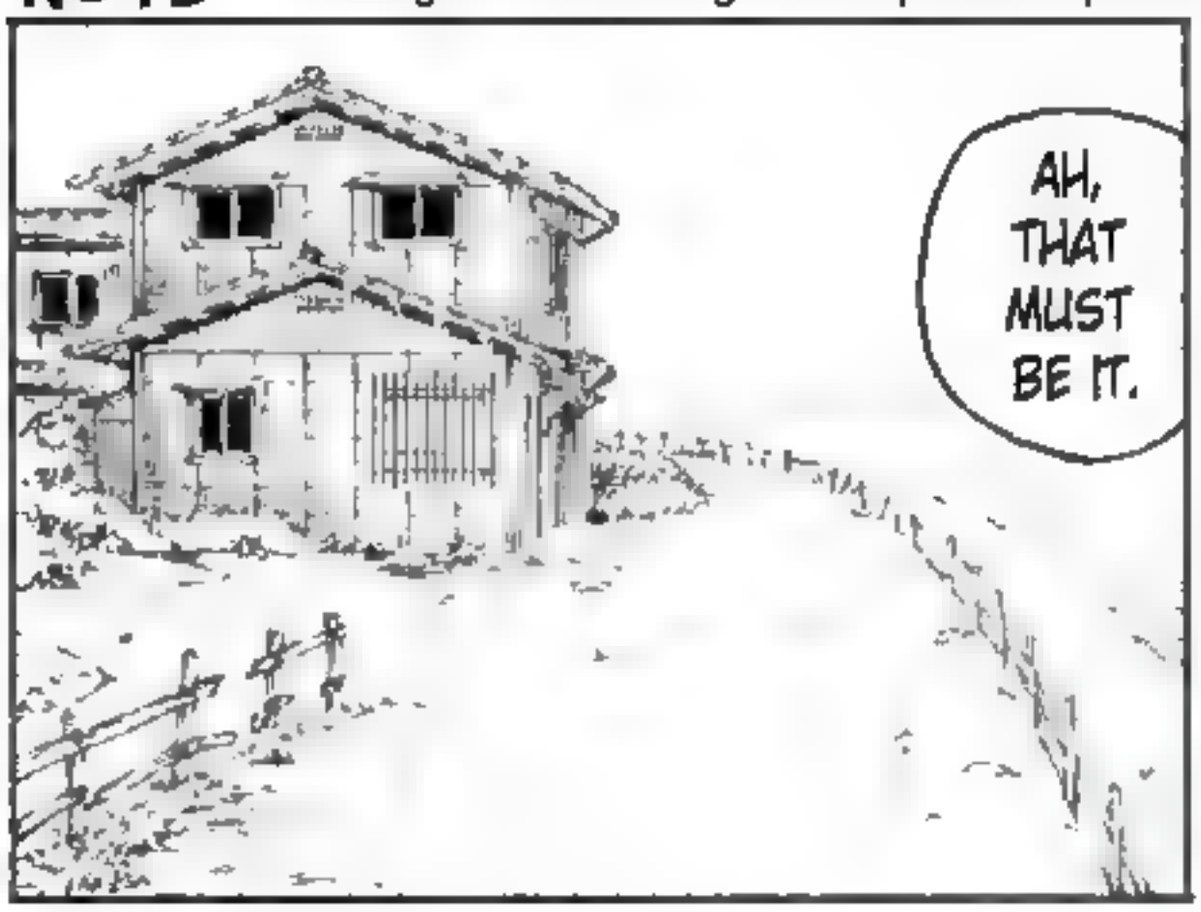
NOW ARRIVING IN OOMORI

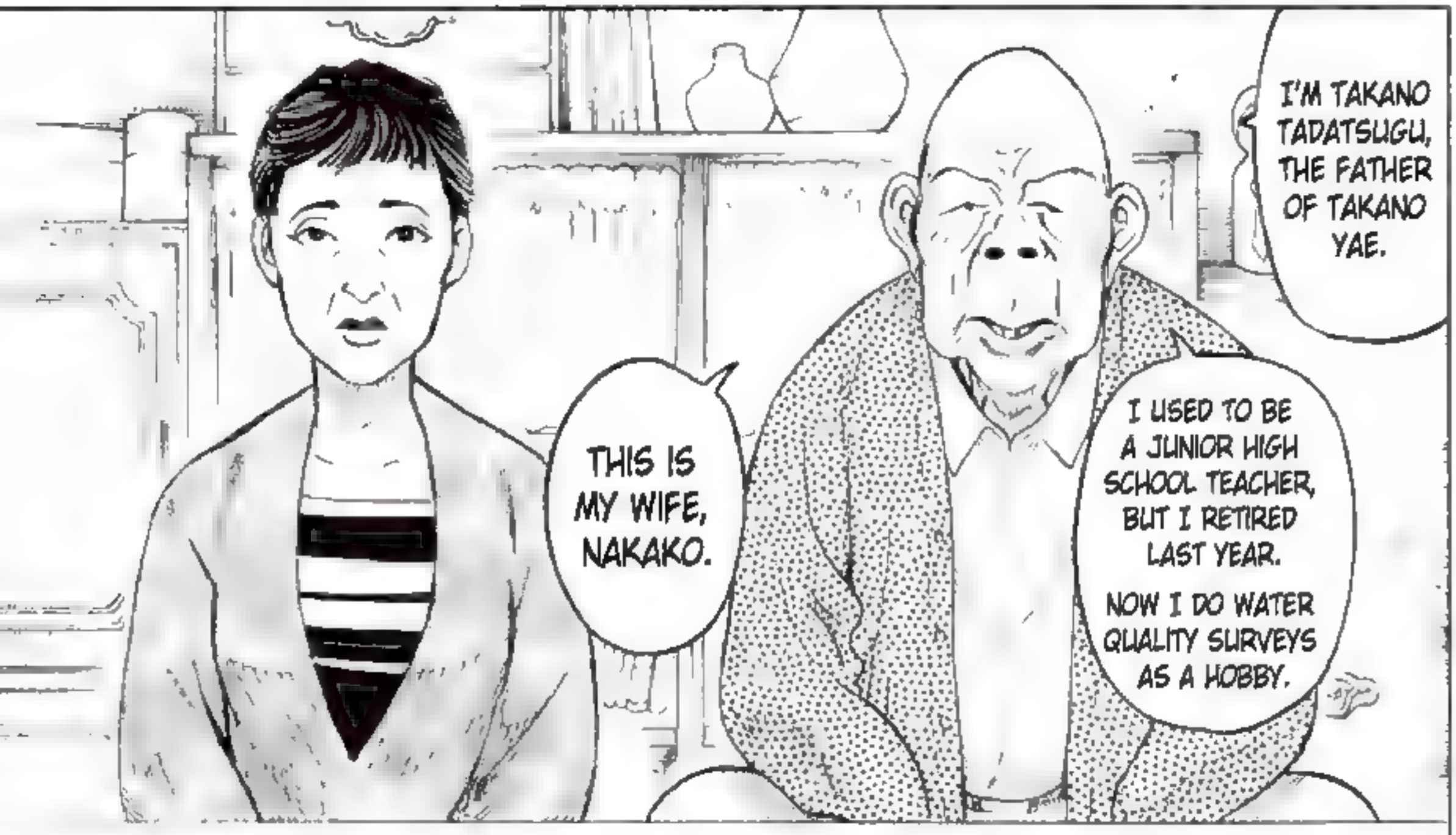
AH, THAT'S OUR STOP.

BELONGING TO A GROUP LIKE THAT IS ILLEGAL THESE DAYS...



NOTE The villagers are making *nori*: square-shaped sheets of seaweed used for wrapping sushi.




I'M TAKANO TADATSUGU, THE FATHER OF TAKANO YAE.
THIS IS MY WIFE, NAKAKO.
I USED TO BE A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, BUT I RETIRED LAST YEAR.
NOW I DO WATER QUALITY SURVEYS AS A HOBBY.

AND I'M KIBA.

THANK YOU.

AH, YES SIR.

I'M NAGATO, FROM THE TOKYO POLICE.

IF YOU DON'T MIND, I NEED YOU TO IDENTIFY HER...

THESE ARE PHOTO-GRAPHS OF THE SCENE.

YOUR DAUGHTER, YAE-SAN, WAS AMONG THE DECEASED...

YOU HAVE MY CONDOLENCES.

WE'RE HERE TO DISCUSS THE GROUP MURDER-SUICIDE INCIDENT...

IT'S GOTTA BE AWFUL TO HAVE TO LOOK AT PICTURES OF YOUR OWN DAUGHTER'S MURDER...

.....

YAE BURNED HERSELF ON A CHARCOAL STOVE WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD...

BUT... THIS WOMAN HAS SCARS ON HER LEFT ARM, JUST LIKE YAE...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE NOW.

I... I COULDN'T SAY.

SHE RAN OFF FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO.

ANYTHING YOU KNOW MIGHT HELP.

WE STILL HAVE NO IDEA WHY THEY ALL CHOSE TO DIE TOGETHER.

WELL ... THE DEAD WERE ALL DRESSED IN WHITE ROBES AND THEY CARRIED NO POSSESSIONS, SO CONFIRMING THEIR IDENTITIES HAS BEEN DIFFICULT.

MR. DETECTIVE, DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE PHOTOS?

THAT'S *SHUNSHIN*, ISN'T IT?

WAIT, THAT MAN...

HE SHOULDN'T BE SHOWING THEM OTHER CRIME SCENE PHOTOS...

!!

LICK

WHO IS THIS "SHUN-SHIN" PERSON?

SHUNSHIN?

YOU MEAN YAMADA HARUO-KUN?

YES... HE SEEMED TERRIBLY ANGRY WHEN WE LAST SAW HIM.

HE KEPT TALKING ABOUT THE EMPEROR...

HE WAS A STUDENT WHO LIVED HERE.

HIS NAME WAS YAMADA HARUO, BUT HE CHANGED IT TO "SHUNSHIN" WHEN HE BECAME A BUDDHIST MONK.

HE CAME BACK HERE ONCE, AFTER THE WAR.

EMPE-ROR KUMA-ZAWA?

YOU MEAN THAT FAKE WHO CLAIMED HE WAS THE TRUE EMPEROR OF JAPAN?

THAT'S RIGHT!

HE WAS TALKING ABOUT "EMPEROR KUMAZAWA," WASN'T HE?

I WONDER IF THAT'S RELATED TO THE SHINOU-DAN SOMEHOW...?

EMPEROR KUMA-ZAWA?

WELL THAT'S STRANGE...

BUT DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO DISMISS HIM, KIBA-KUN.

NO ONE'S QUITE SURE WHETHER HIS CLAIMS WERE TRUE.

NOTE The American occupation of Japan lasted from 1945 to 1952. MacArthur believed that changing the Emperor (who was believed to be a living god) would further destabilize the country, so he used him as a puppet leader during the transition period.

"I AM THE RIGHTFUL EMPEROR OF JAPAN."

...OR SO HE CLAIMED.

AFTER THE WAR, HE MADE A DIRECT APPEAL TO GENERAL MACARTHUR, THE AMERICAN IN CHARGE OF THE OCCUPATION OF JAPAN.

"EMPEROR KUMAZAWA," AKA KUMAZAWA HIROMICHI, WAS A SHOP-KEEPER FROM THE SUBURBS OF NAGOYA.

HIS CLAIM STARTED CONTROVERSY THROUGHOUT JAPAN...

NO, THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Another Emperor?
Man Claims Descent From Ancient

Another Emperor i
"Kumazawa

The Other Emperor

Kumazawa

"IN THE 14TH CENTURY, THERE WERE TWO IMPERIAL COURTS: NORTH AND SOUTH."

"FOR POLITICAL REASONS, THE NORTHERN EMPEROR, GO-KOMATSU, WAS DECLARED THE RULER OF JAPAN, AND HIS DESCENDENTS STILL RULE TODAY."

"BUT THE DESCENDENTS OF THE SOUTHERN EMPEROR, GO-KAMEYAMA, ARE THE TRUE HEIRS TO THE IMPERIAL LINE."

THAT WAS THE "EMPEROR KUMAZAWA INCIDENT."

Rival Empere
Gains Popul
Support

"I am the
rightful
Emperor
of Japan."

Emperor Kumazawa: Does He Have The Imperial Treasures?

WAIT A MINUTE...

HM?

EMPEROR KUMAZAWA WAS EVEN SAID TO HAVE ONE OF THE IMPERIAL TREASURES...

BEFORE THE WAR, IT WAS TABOO TO SPEAK OF THE ERA WHEN JAPAN HAD TWO EMPERORS...

SO PEOPLE WERE FASCINATED BY THE STORY.

WAS IT A RELI-GIOUS THING?

WHY WOULD A MONK BE ANGRY ABOUT THE EMPEROR?

OF COURSE, THE CURRENT EMPEROR DISMISSED HIS CLAIMS, AND THE WHOLE THING FIZZLED OUT AFTER THAT.

"NICE POLICE-MEN?"

SORRY, WE DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY.

DEAR, DON'T TALK THAT WAY IN FRONT OF THE NICE POLICEMEN!

WHAT WILL THEY THINK?

WHO KNOWS...

ANYWAY, THAT KUMAZAWA WAS OBVIOUSLY FULL OF SHIT.

THE SOUTHERN DYNASTY DIED OUT A LONG TIME AGO.

HEY, DON'T GET ME WRONG, I'M NOT SOME FAR-LEFT COMMIE!

I JUST DON'T LIKE THOSE RIGHT-WING NATIONALISTS.

SOMETIMES MY TONGUE SLIPS...

WHO CAN EVEN TELL?

MONKS ALL LOOK THE SAME WHEN THEY SHAVE THEIR HEADS.

CAN'T TELL THEM APART.

WELL, MAYBE ...

HIS EYEBROWS LOOK FAMILIAR...

IT'S ALRIGHT. ANYWAY, CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS SHUNSHIN-SAN?

YOU SAY THE MAN IN THE PHOTO-GRAPH RESEMBLES HIM, CORRECT?

I DUNNO...

LAST I HEARD, HE WAS STAYING AT A TEMPLE IN KANAGAWA.

HM...

I SEE...

WELL THEN, DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW HIS CURRENT ADDRESS OR CONTACT INFOR-MATION?

THAT WAS BEFORE THE WAR, THOUGH.

AND WE LOST MOST OF OUR PHOTOS IN THE WAR.

ALL WE HAVE LEFT IS THAT PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR.

HM...

.....

ABOUT HOW OLD WOULD HE BE NOW?

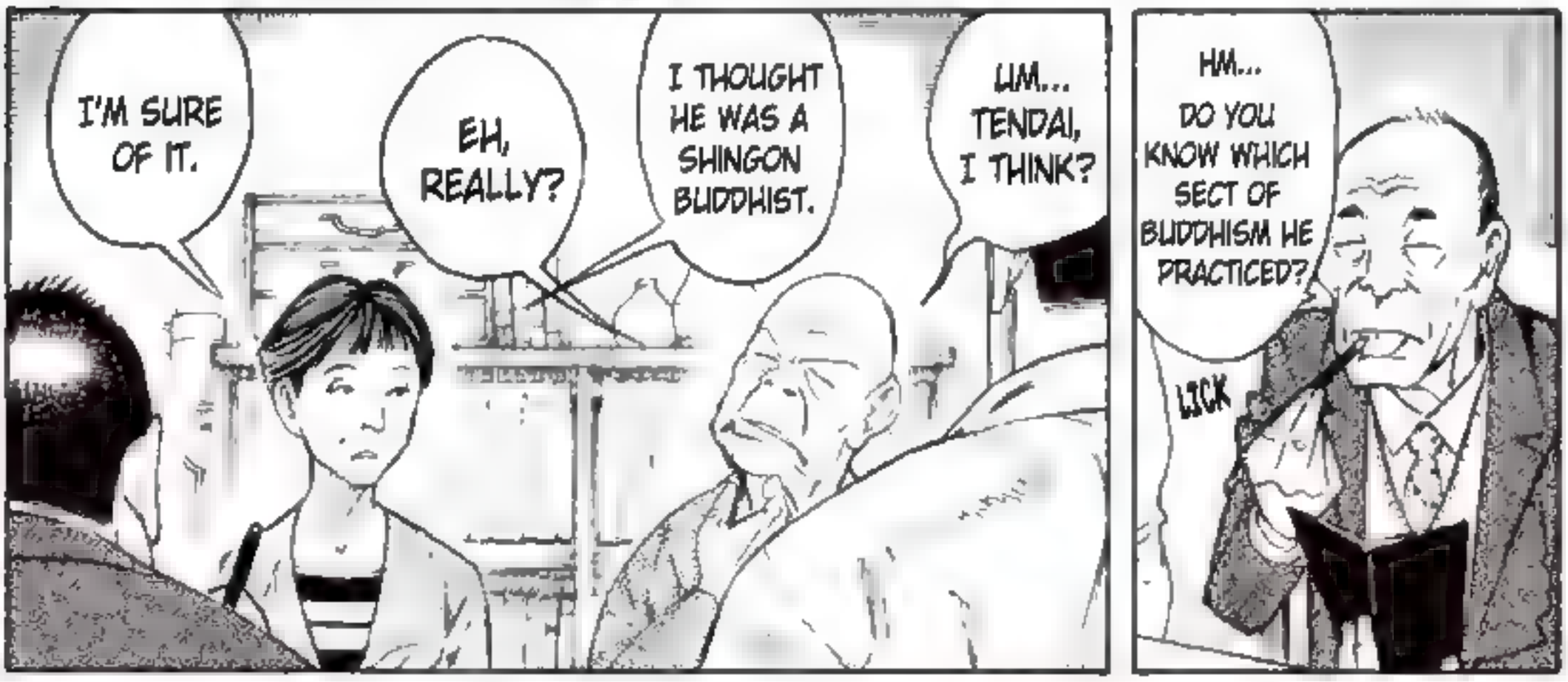
CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT HIM?

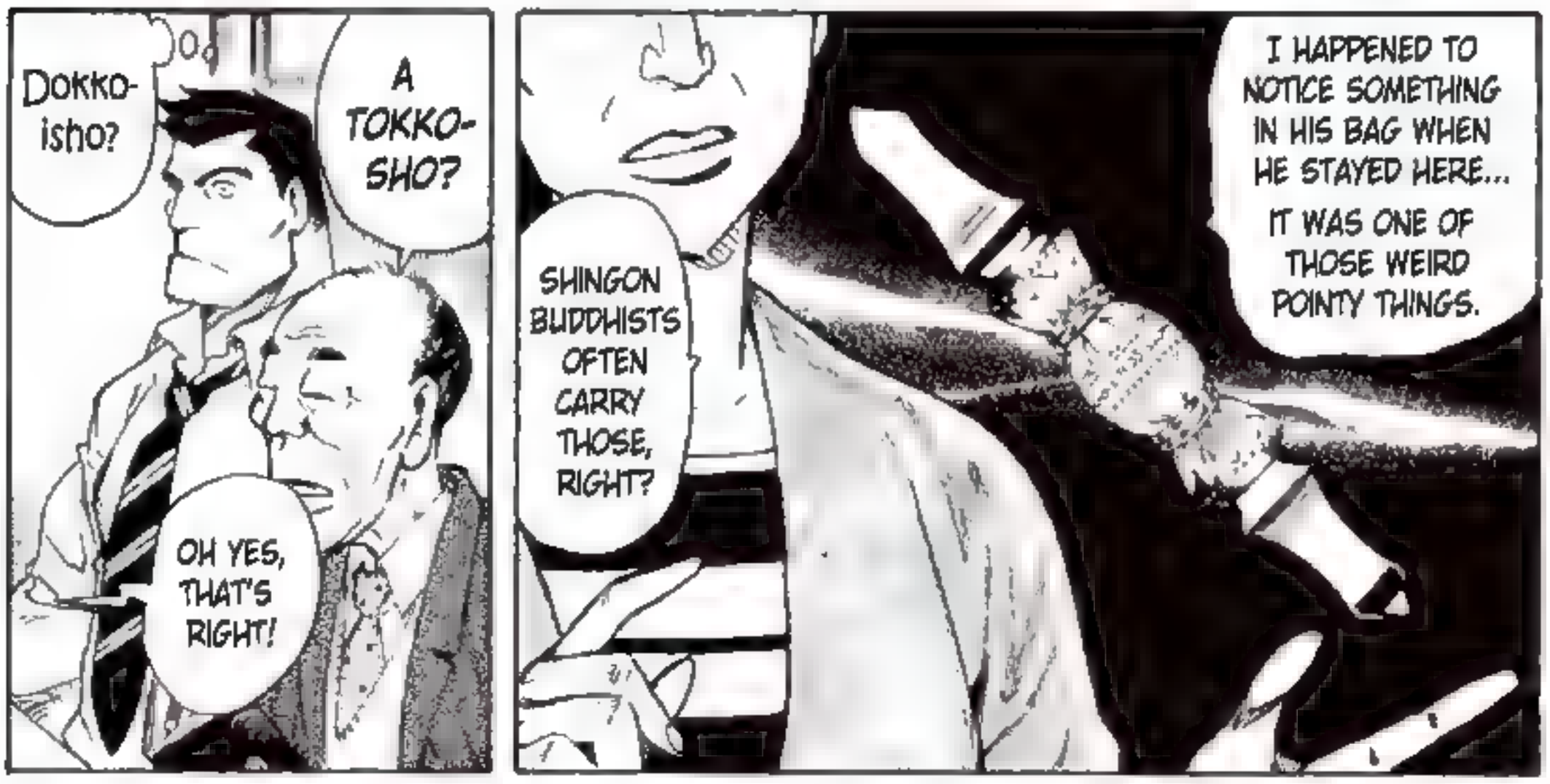
THE SAME AS ME...

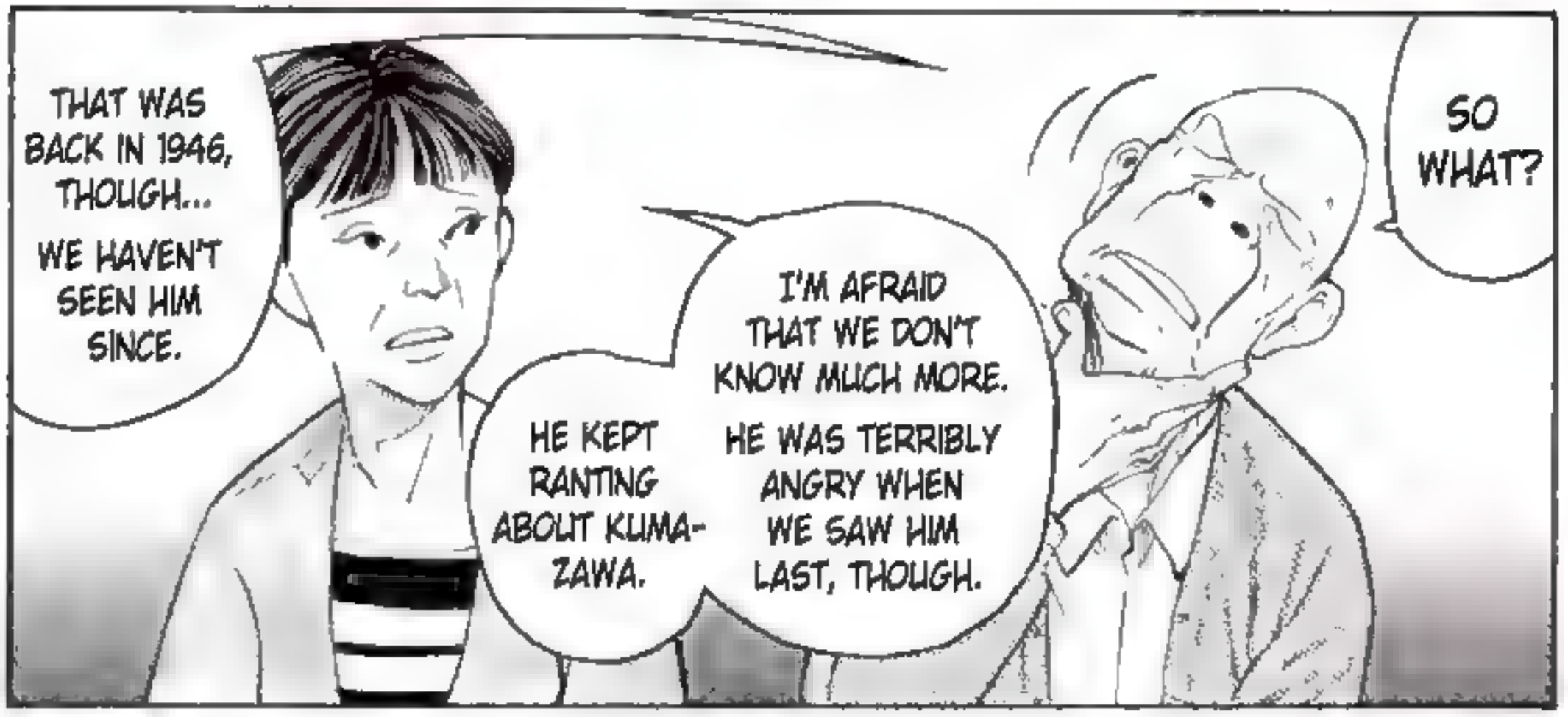
35 OR 36, I'D SAY.

TALK TALK TALK

NOTE Tendai and Shingen are two sects of Buddhism, but both are considered "esoteric" schools. Tendai is a little more philosophical, while Shingon is a little more mystical and ritual-oriented. Shingon Buddhists often carry a ritual tool called a "tokkosho" (a "vajra" in Sanskrit), which is supposed to symbolize a magic spear. Kiba mishears "tokkosho" as "dokkoisho," which is just a nonsense phrase that's frequently said by old people in Japan.


I'M SURE OF IT.
EH, REALLY?
I THOUGHT HE WAS A SHINGON BUDDHIST.
UM... TENDAI, I THINK?
HM...
DO YOU KNOW WHICH SECT OF BUDDHISM HE PRACTICED?
LICK


DOKKO-isho?
A TOKKO-SHO?
OH YES, THAT'S RIGHT!
SHINGON BUDDHISTS OFTEN CARRY THOSE, RIGHT?
I HAPPENED TO NOTICE SOMETHING IN HIS BAG WHEN HE STAYED HERE...
IT WAS ONE OF THOSE WEIRD POINTY THINGS.


THAT WAS BACK IN 1946, THOUGH...
WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE.
HE KEPT RANTING ABOUT KUMA-ZAWA.
I'M AFRAID THAT WE DON'T KNOW MUCH MORE.
HE WAS TERRIBLY ANGRY WHEN WE SAW HIM LAST, THOUGH.
SO WHAT?

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, OUR DAUGHTER RAN AWAY THE DAY AFTER SHUNSHIN-SAN VISITED!

OH, BUT WAIT...

WHAT!?

!

IT WAS IN FEBRUARY OF 1946.

THAT'S RIGHT! WE WERE SO WORRIED ABOUT YAE THAT I FORGOT ALL ABOUT HIM.

WE THOUGHT SHE WAS JUST RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME.

NO... WE DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ANY CRIME INVOLVED.

DID YOU CALL THE POLICE?

YAMADA-KUN MANAGED TO FIND HER AND BRING HER BACK HOME,

BUT WE ENDED UP HAVING AN EVEN BIGGER FIGHT.

AND THAT'S WHEN YAMADA-KUN - SHUNSHIN - SHOWED UP.

YAE RAN OFF THAT NIGHT.

YAE WAS A HEADSTRONG GIRL WHO LIKED PARTIES AND BOYS, SO WE OFTEN ARGUED ABOUT HER LIFESTYLE.

THAT EVENING, WE HAD A BIG FIGHT...

THE NEXT DAY, SHE DISAP-PEARED...

EVEN IF THEY FELL IN LOVE AND RAN AWAY TOGETHER, WHY WOULD THEY KILL THEMSELVES SEVEN YEARS LATER?

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...

A MONK AND A WAYWARD GIRL...?

I SEE...

HE COULD HAVE TOLD YAE SOME STORY TO CONVINCE HER TO MEET HIM THE NEXT DAY, AND THEN KIDNAPPED HER...

MAYBE IT WAS A KIDNAPPING?

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE DEEP IN THOUGHT.

ANY IDEAS?

OR MAYBE HE'S THE ONE WHO GOT KIDNAPPED...

BUT WHO WOULD KIDNAP A MONK?

BUT WHY?

HE SEEMED VERY OPPOSED TO EMPEROR KUMAZAWA, THOUGH.

I DON'T THINK HE WAS EITHER OF THOSE...

HE WAS WILLING TO LISTEN TO POLITICAL OPINIONS FROM THE LEFT AND FROM THE RIGHT.

WAS HE AN IMPERIAL LOYALIST, OR A COMMUNIST, OR...?

HM...

WHAT WERE YAMADA SHUNSHIN'S POLITICAL LEANINGS?

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT KUMAZAWA WAS BEING DISRESPECTFUL TO THE EMPEROR...

SOME PEOPLE STILL GET WORKED UP OVER THINGS LIKE THAT.

WHY WAS HE SO PISSED OFF ABOUT KUMAZAWA?

HUH.... I SEE...

HARDLY ANYBODY TOOK THAT GUY'S CLAIM TO THE THRONE SERIOUSLY.

I PROMISE, WE'LL KEEP TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR DAUGHTER.

YOU HAVE MY WORD.

WELL, IF YOU THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE, PLEASE GIVE US A CALL.

WHAT-EVER.

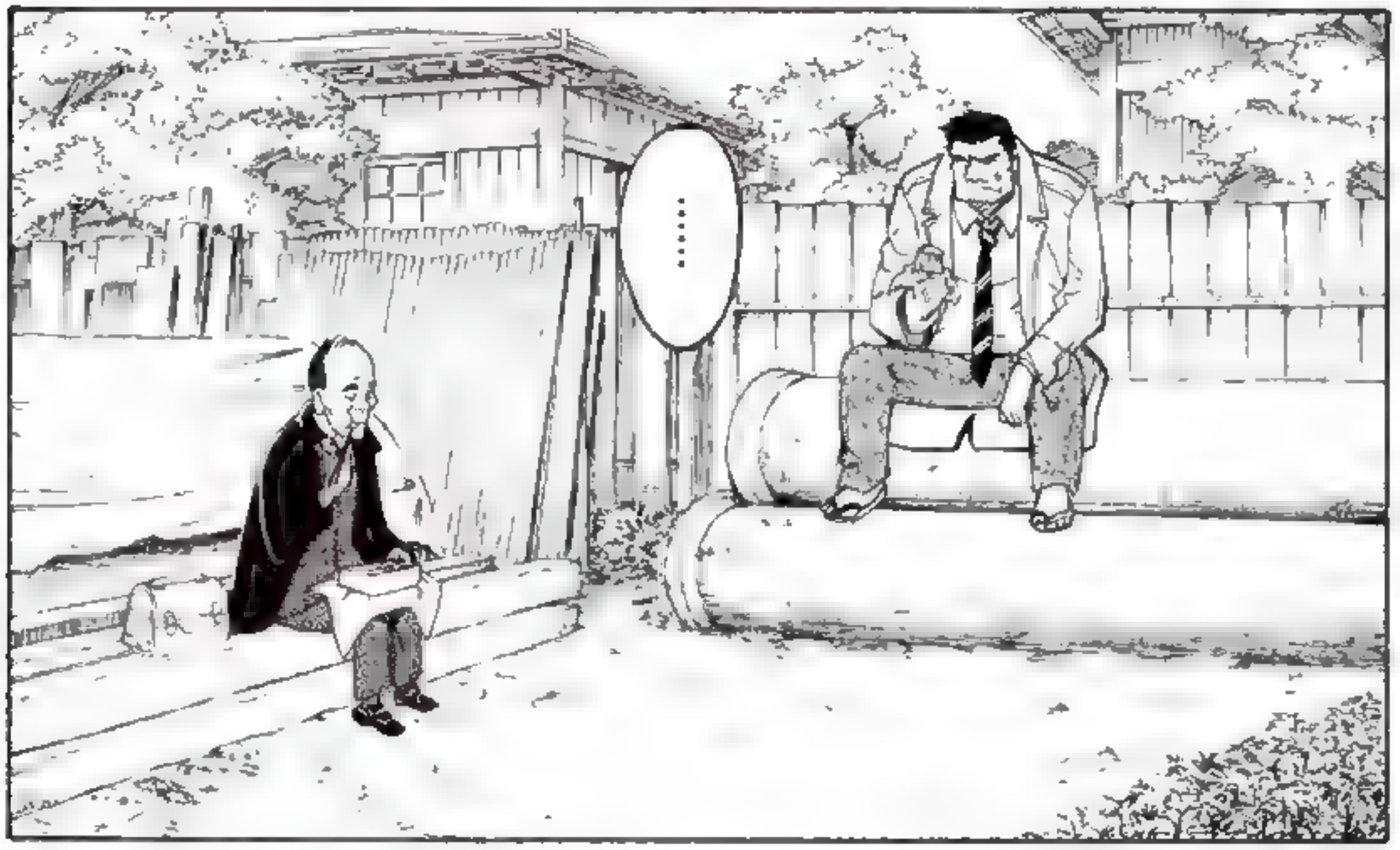
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.

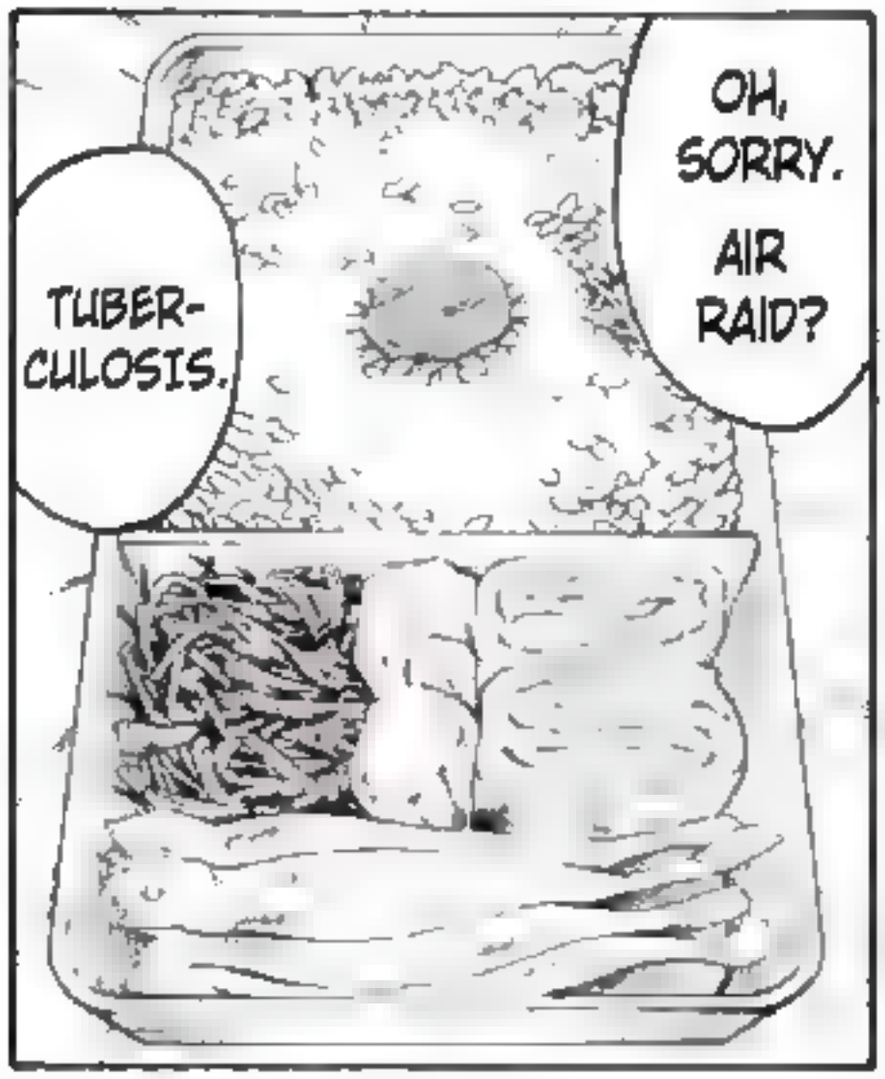
THERE WAS SOMETHING *WEIRD* ABOUT THAT COUPLE...

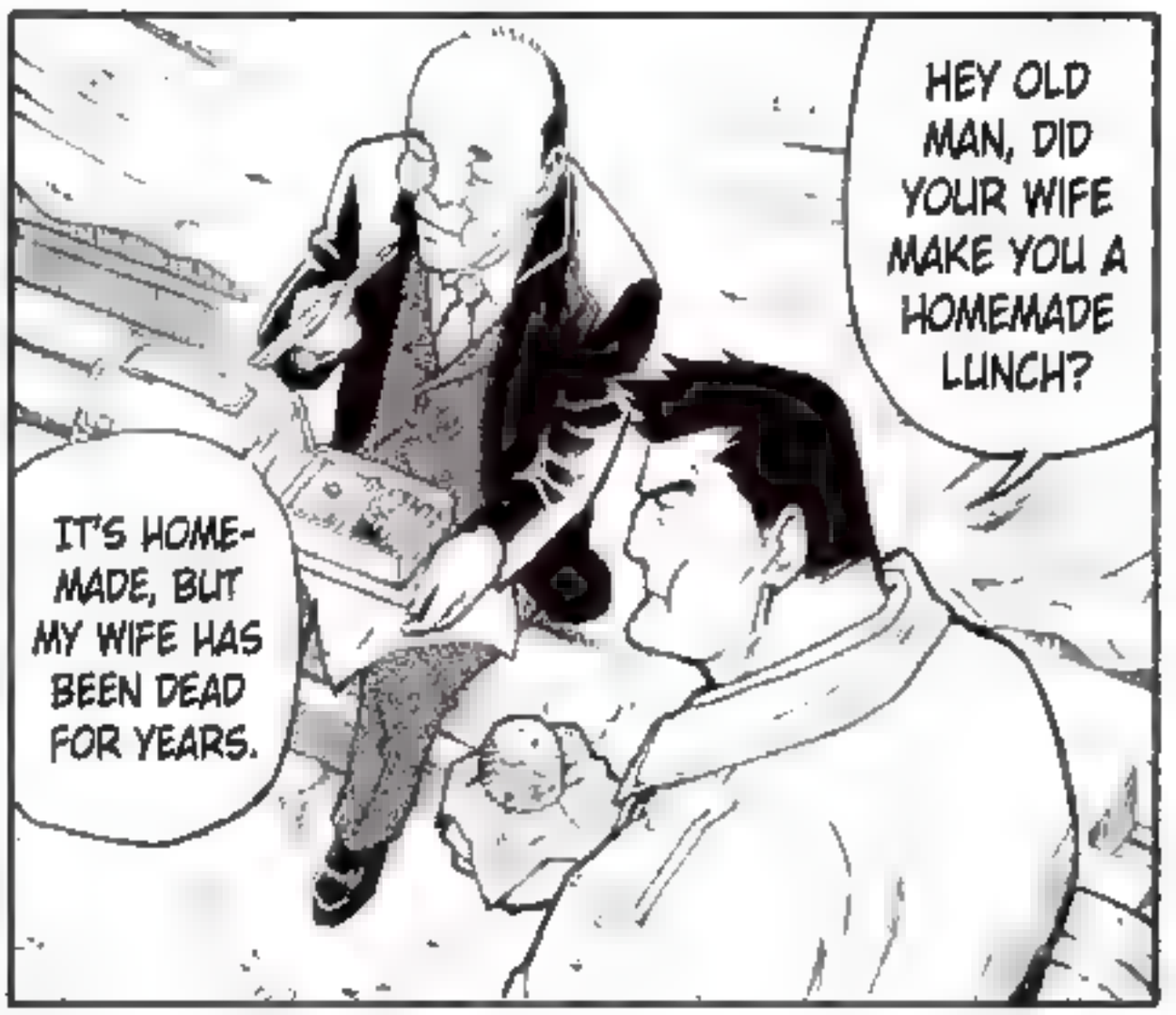
IT'S LIKE THEY DIDN'T CARE WHETHER THEIR DAUGHTER WAS ALIVE OR DEAD.

MAYBE THEY WERE RELIEVED TO GET SOME CLOSURE?

Sign: Steamed Potatoes







I WAS SO BUSY THAT I BARELY WENT HOME...

I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE THAT SHE WAS SICK.

IT WAS RIGHT AROUND THE TIME OF THE SHINOU-DAN CASE.

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO INTERFERE WITH MY WORK, SO SHE HID HOW SICK SHE REALLY WAS...

BY THE TIME I FOUND OUT, IT WAS TOO LATE.

HAHA, WELL, MAYBE I WAS THROWING MY LIFE AWAY TOO!

WHENEVER PEOPLE THROW THEIR LIVES AWAY FOR NO GOOD REASON, I JUST CAN'T IGNORE IT.

I WONDER IF MY WIFE'S SPIRIT IS CURSING ME...

OOMORI POLICE STATION

EW, THEY'RE SOFT BOILED...

TYPICAL OLD MAN FOOD...

Boiled eggs!

OH!

DO YOU WANT ONE?

...SURE, THANKS.

……

UNDER-STOOD.

YES…

YES…

WHAT?

SHUU-SAN, SHUU-SAN!

WITH THE CASE?

YES.

BUT ISN'T IT UNDER THE KANAGAWA PD'S JURIS-DICTION?

THAT WAS THE CHIEF.

THEY'RE SHORT-STAFFED HERE, SO HE WANTS US TO HELP OUT.

A CHRYSAN-THEMUM CREST…

A MYST-ERIOUS MONK…

A GOLDEN SKULL…

OOMORI POLICE DEPARTMENT

.....

I'M GOING TO DO A LITTLE MORE INVESTI-GATING.

WELL, IT'S LATE, SO LET'S START TOMORROW.

WE'RE JUST LENDING A HELPING HAND.

IF IT HELPS THEM SOLVE THE CASE FASTER, THEN IT'S ALL GOOD, RIGHT?

NOTE Kanda is a wealthy district in central Tokyo.

ENOKIZU REIJIROU IS A WEIRDO WHO RUNS A DETECTIVE BUSINESS IN KANDA.

WE'RE FRIENDS... SORT OF.

SCRATCH SCRATCH

DAMN IT...

I'D BETTER TELL REIJIROU ABOUT THIS.

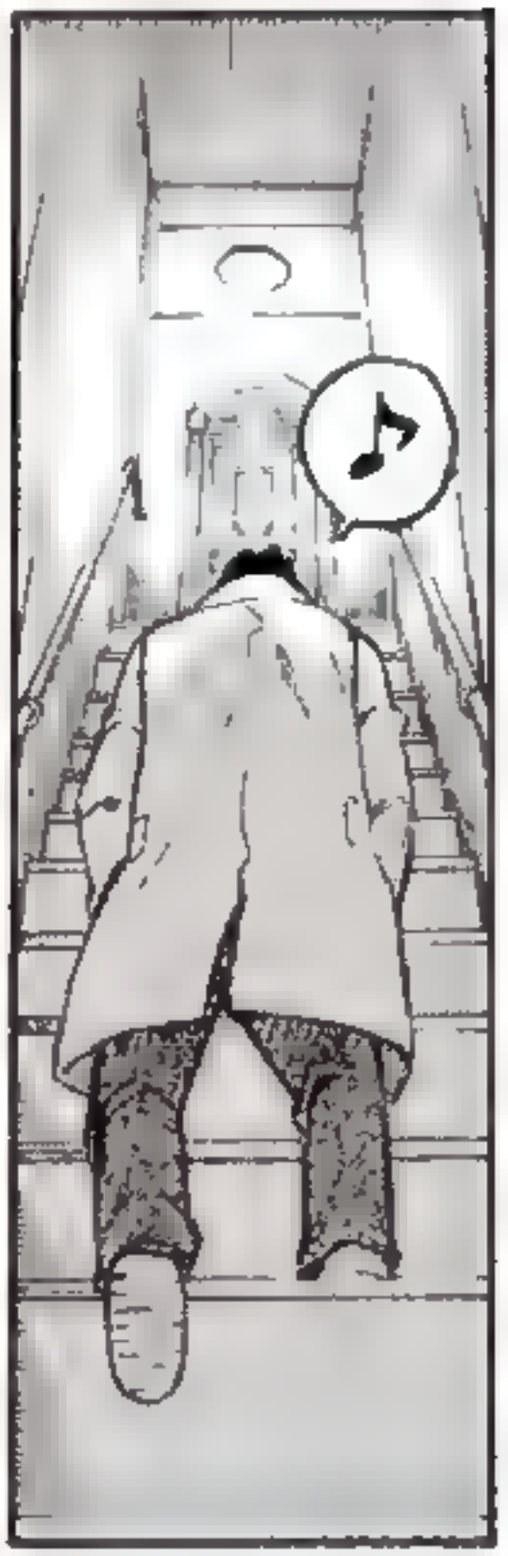
I'D BETTER BUY SOME BOOZE...

"ROSE CROSS?"

WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?

CREAK

The Rose Cross Detective Agency



HE HAS A CUSTO-MER?

I DON'T BELIEVE IT...

THIS IS KYOUGOKU'S MESS!

DON'T TRY TO DUMP IT ON ME!

I WASN'T TRYING TO, I SWEAR!

HM?

!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?

Ooh, it's Kibashuu!

An even bigger idiot has arrived!!

KIBA-SAN!

OH, HEY BOSS...

AND THAT'S KYOUGOKU-DOU'S LITTLE SISTER, CHUUZENJI ATSUKO...

THAT'S SEKIGUCHI TATSUMI...

HE'S A NOVELIST NOW, BUT HE WAS MY COMMANDING OFFICER DURING THE WAR.

WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU ASK THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING WANNABE DETECTIVE FOR HELP?

FLOP

TCH!

IT WASN'T MY IDEA...

MAYBE YOU CAN HELP THEM, BOSS.

SO WHY ARE YOU HERE?

HMPH!

HMPH!

SENSEI AND ATSUKO-SAN CAME HERE TO TALK TO ENO-SAN, BUT HE'S BEING STUBBORN AS USUAL.

THAT'S NOT NECESSARY!!

WANT ME TO KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO HIM?

CRACK

YOU KNOW THAT PRETTY BOY BRAT ONLY DOES WHAT HE WANTS TO DO.

BUT WE PROMISED TO HELP UDAGAWA-SENSEI...

OH YEAH...

WE'RE ACTUALLY HERE ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE, KIBA-SAN.

WELL, I GUESS IT CAN'T HURT TO HEAR HER OUT.

TCH...

THERE ARE HEADS WITHOUT BODIES, AND BODIES WITHOUT HEADS, AND HEADLESS BODIES RISING FROM THE GRAVE...

IT'S TOO SPOOKY FOR ME!!

EVEN IF IT'S A REQUEST FROM A-CHAN, THIS CASE IS TOO MUCH FOR US TO HANDLE!

IS THIS RELATED SOME-HOW!?

THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE!?

WAIT A MINUTE... DOES HE MEAN....

HEADS WITHOUT BODIES?

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO ZUSHI IN THE WINTER!

IT'S TOO COLD!

I HATE GOING TO THE OCEAN IN THE WINTER!

I HATE BEING COLD!!

BUT ENO-SAN, I SWEAR, IT'S A TRUE STORY...

I TOLD YOU BEFORE - TAKE IT TO KYOUGOKU!

BUT...

NO...
HE TALKED ABOUT BODIES WITHOUT HEADS, TOO.

COME TO THINK OF IT, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SKELETONS THAT THOSE FLOATING SKULLS WERE ATTACHED TO?

ZUSHI AGAIN!?

IS THAT WHY THEY'RE HERE?

ZUSHI !?

ARE THEY ASKING HIM TO INVESTIGATE THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE?

IF IT HELPS THEM SOLVE THE CASE FASTER, THEN IT'S ALL GOOD, RIGHT?

WE'RE JUST LENDING A HELPING HAND.

EVEN THOUGH ISHII IS IN CHARGE OF THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE...

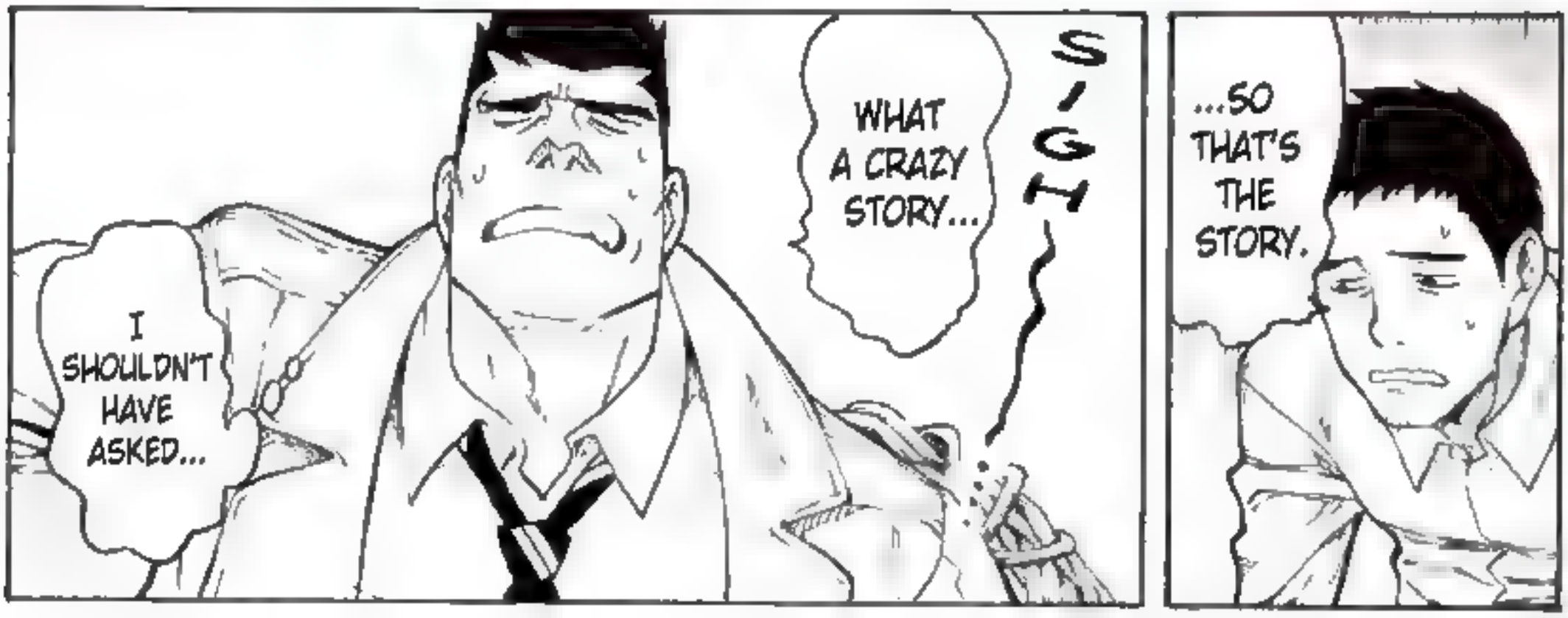
NO WAY, IT HAS TO BE A COINCIDENCE..

BUT...

I CAN'T JUST LET THIS GO...

WELL...
SIGH

COME ON, THEN, TELL ME ABOUT THE CASE.


I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED...
WHAT A CRAZY STORY...
SIGH
...SO THAT'S THE STORY.

THE NEW HUSBAND DIDN'T BELIEVE HER AT FIRST, BUT THEN HE FOUND BLOOD ALL OVER THE GARDEN...

AND SHE ALSO CLAIMS THAT SHE KILLED HER PREVIOUS HUSBAND FOUR TIMES OVER...

SO THIS NOVELIST GUY'S WIFE CLAIMS TO HAVE MEMORIES OF A PAST LIFE...

ARE YOU SURE THIS ISN'T JUST ONE OF YOUR STUPID NOVELS!?

I'M SORRY, BOSS!

THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME!

WAH!

SLAM

WHAT THE HELL KIND OF BULLSHIT STORY IS THIS!?

HUH?

WHAT THE...

NO IT'S NOT.

I'VE ALREADY FIGURED IT OUT.

HOW COULD THE DEAD HUSBAND KEEP COMING BACK AFTER HIS HEAD WAS CUT OFF!?

THAT'S RIDICULOUS!

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN TWINS!

ENO-SAN...

EVEN TWINS HAVE SOME DIFFERENCES, YOU KNOW?

SIGH

SLUMP

HUFF HUFF

MAYBE HE WORE MAKEUP?

ANYWAY, THE FIRST GUY DIED 8 YEARS AGO - WHY WOULD THE "TWIN" STILL LOOK THE SAME NOW?

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T PAY ATTEN-TION...

ONE OF MY FRIENDS IS MARRIED TO A TWIN, AND I CAN'T TELL HER APART FROM HER SISTER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS, KIBA-SAN!?

ANYWAY, ENO-SAN, SHE CLAIMS THAT SHE KILLED HER HUSBAND FOUR TIMES!

SO EVEN IF THEY WERE TWINS, THEY'D HAVE TO COME BACK TO LIFE...

.....

QUAD-RUPLETS, THEN!

AT FIRST IT SEEMED LIKE UDAGAWA AKEMI-SAN WAS JUST SUFFERING FROM HALLU-CINATIONS OR DELUSIONS...

BUT NOW IT SEEMS LIKE THERE COULD BE SOME TRUTH TO THE STORY...

SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI IS VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT MATTERS OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

WE'RE JUST TRYING TO HELP WITH THE CLIENT'S REQUEST.

MAYBE THE STORY WAS FAKE?

SMALL-TOWN NEWSPAPERS PRINT ALL KINDS OF GARBAGE.

HM... I DOUBT IT.

NEWSPAPERS WERE UNDER STRICT CENSORSHIP BACK IN THOSE DAYS.

SO EIGHT YEARS AGO, SOMEBODY MURDERED A DESERTER AND CHOPPED OFF HIS HEAD, HUH?

SO EVEN IF IT WAS A BIG STORY, WE DIDN'T HEAR ABOUT IT.

ME AND SEKIGUCHI WERE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC BACK THEN...

LIKE ANYBODY CARED ABOUT OUR MORALE!

GRR...

.....

SOMETHING THAT GRISLY WOULD BE BAD FOR PUBLIC MORALE...

MAYBE WE NEVER HEARD ABOUT THE STORY BECAUSE IT WAS SUPPRESSED BY THE MILITARY?

HE'S STILL AN IDIOT.

...HE'S PROB-ABLY RIGHT.

GRR..

"JUSTICE IS SERVED: COWARDLY DESERTER DIES A HORRIBLE DEATH!!"

NO WAY, THAT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF STORY THAT THE MILITARY WOULD LOVE!

"MAYBE" ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH!!

GRR GRRR

WELL... MAYBE...?

ARE THERE ANY VERIFIABLE FACTS IN THIS CASE?

WHAT-EVER, THAT'S IRRELE-VANT.

EVEN I THINK IT SOUNDS STUPID.

BUT THIS BEHEADING CASE SOUNDS PRETTY DAMNED SKETCHY...

THEY MIGHT NOT TAKE US SERIOUSLY.

WELL, I CAN ALWAYS ASK THE NAGANO POLICE DEPARTMENT IF THEY HAVE ANY RECORDS WE CAN BORROW.

HE'S *RELYING* ON YOU, ENOKIZU-SAN.

I MEAN...

UDAGAWA-SENSEI SPECIFICALLY ASKED FOR ENOKIZU-SAN'S HELP...

WE CAN'T JUST DUMP THIS ON SOME OTHER DETECTIVE...

RELYING ON THAT IDIOT?

RELYING ON ME?

ACCORDING TO KYOU-GOKUDOU...

ENOKIZU CAN SEE THINGS THAT NORMAL PEOPLE CAN'T SEE.

EVEN WHEN WE WERE KIDS, HE HAD AN UNCANNY SENSE OF INTUITION...

EVEN IF HE DOES LOOK LIKE A PORCELAIN DOLL...

HE CAN SEE OTHER PEOPLE'S *MEMORIES* ...

IT'S MORE LIKE A MENTAL DISORDER THAN A SUPERPOWER, THOUGH.

THERE'S NO CASE THAT I CAN'T SOLVE!

QUIET, YOU TOFU-BRAINED IDIOT!

IF YOU DRAG HIM INTO THIS CASE, HE'LL JUST MAKE A MESS OF THINGS.

HOW COULD ANYBODY RELY ON THAT UNRELIABLE IDIOT!?

ENO-SAN, YOU DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO LISTEN TO THE EVIDENCE...

I TOLD YOU THAT BEFORE!

BUT IF THIS CASE INVOLVES ANY MONSTERS OR DEMONS OR GHOSTS OR OTHER WEIRD SHIT, THAT'S KYOUGOKU'S AREA OF EXPERTISE, NOT MINE!

AND THE STORY OF YAMADA SHUNSHIN...

HE MIGHT HAVE SOME INSIGHT INTO THE GROUP SUICIDE AT FUTAGOYAMA...

KYOU-GOKU, HUH...

WELL, HE'S AN EXPERT ON MATTERS OF RELIGION AND SUPER-STITION.

KYOTO? WHY?

He was mumbling to himself...

MY BROTHER ISN'T HOME... HE LEFT FOR KYOTO THIS MORNING.

SO WHY ISN'T KYOUGOKU HELPING US WITH THIS CASE?

I RARELY SEE HIM THAT EXCITED!

WELL, THERE'S SOME SORT OF ANTIQUE BOOK SHOW HAPPENING IN KYOTO, SO HE'S GOING SHOPPING... THEY'RE EXHIBITING A RARE BOOK CALLED "CONVERSATIONS WITH TOUSANJIN."

NOTE Eno tends to mishear things. "Tousanjin" is a writer, but "Tou-san" means "father" and "Jii-san" means "old man."

I COULD TRY SENDING HIM A LETTER, BUT KNOWING MY BROTHER, HE'LL JUST PRETEND HE NEVER SAW IT.

"TOUSANJIN," NOT "TOU-SAN." TOUSANJIN WAS A FAMOUS WRITER WHO SPECIALIZED IN BOOKS ABOUT YOUKAI.

HUH? "CONVER-SATIONS WITH OLD MEN?"

HE'S NEVER AROUND WHEN YOU ACTUALLY NEED HIM...

THEY ALL INVOLVE *BONES.*

WAIT....

IT'S STRANGE, THOUGH...

A LOT OF WEIRD THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING NEAR THE TOWN OF ZUSHI.

WHAT IF THEY'RE ALL CONNECTED SOMEHOW?

IS THERE ANYTHING BESIDES ZUSHI THAT CONNECTS THESE CASES?

I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFO...

.....

.....

I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THAT MY WIFE IS CURSING ME.

HM...

PEOPLE WITNESSED THE GOLDEN SKULL, BUT THE REST WAS AKEMI'S DELUSION.

NO, THAT CAN'T BE IT...

MAYBE ALL OF THE CASES INVOLVE CURSES?

MAYBE THERE'S AN EMOTIONAL CONNEC-TION...

I'M BETTER AT HANDS-ON INVESTIGATION THAN I AM AT BRAIN-STORMING.

SIGH

DAMN IT...

SLAM

SO THAT CAN'T BE RELATED TO ANY OF THIS, RIGHT?

AND WHAT ABOUT THAT RUNAWAY GIRL AND THE SUSPICIOUS MONK...?

THAT HAPPENED IN NAGANO...

HOW DOES THIS FIT WITH THE HEADLESS SOLDIER?

Let's go to Nagano!!

I've got an idea!

SO DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE TAKING THE CASE, ENOKIZU-SAN?

I CAN'T GO TO NAGANO NOW!!

Seki-kun, you'd better start packing!

It's a "Journey to the West," so I'll need a monkey as my attendant!

GRAB

HUH!? WHY ME!?

NOTE

"Journey to the West" is a famous Chinese novel in which a Buddhist priest, Sanzo, his attendant, the Monkey King Son Goku, and their followers travel to India to retrieve sacred scrolls. Eno is always teasing Sekiguchi because he looks like a monkey.

SMACK

You're always chattering, just like a monkey!

I...

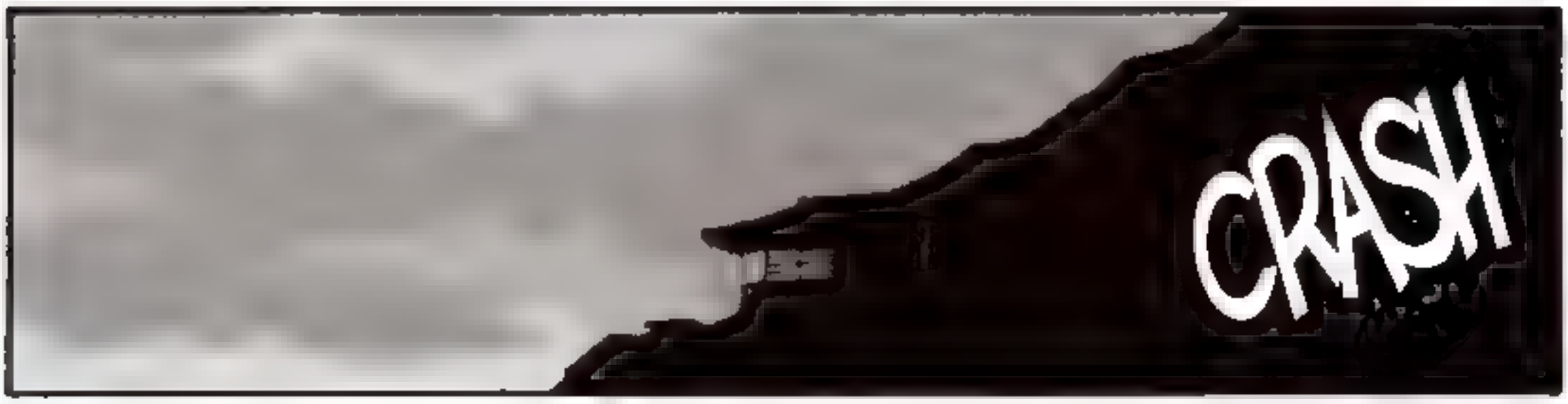
WAIT, I'M NOT GOING TO NAGANO!!

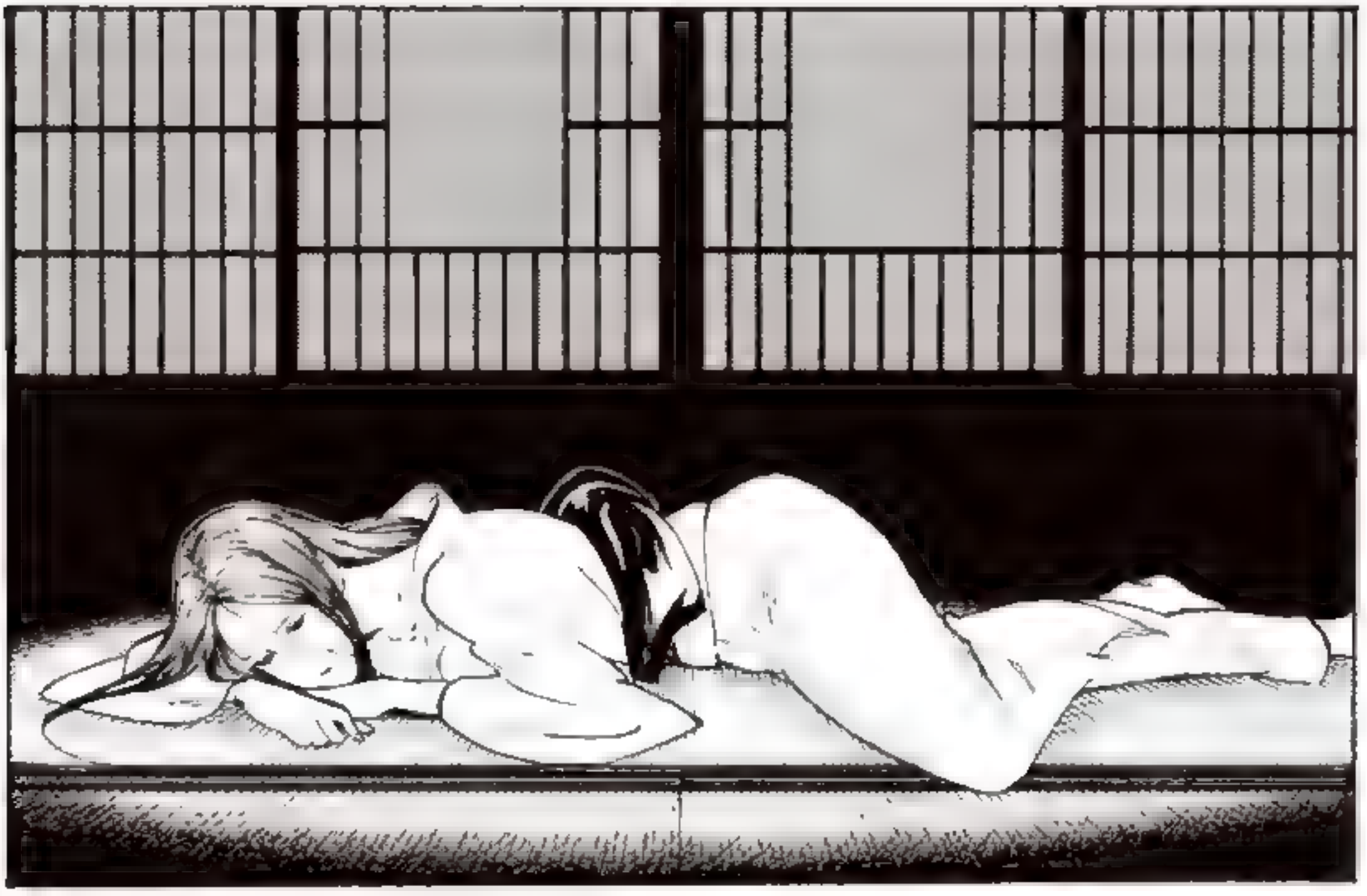
SHEESH ...

TCH...

I GUESS HE'S ON THE CASE.

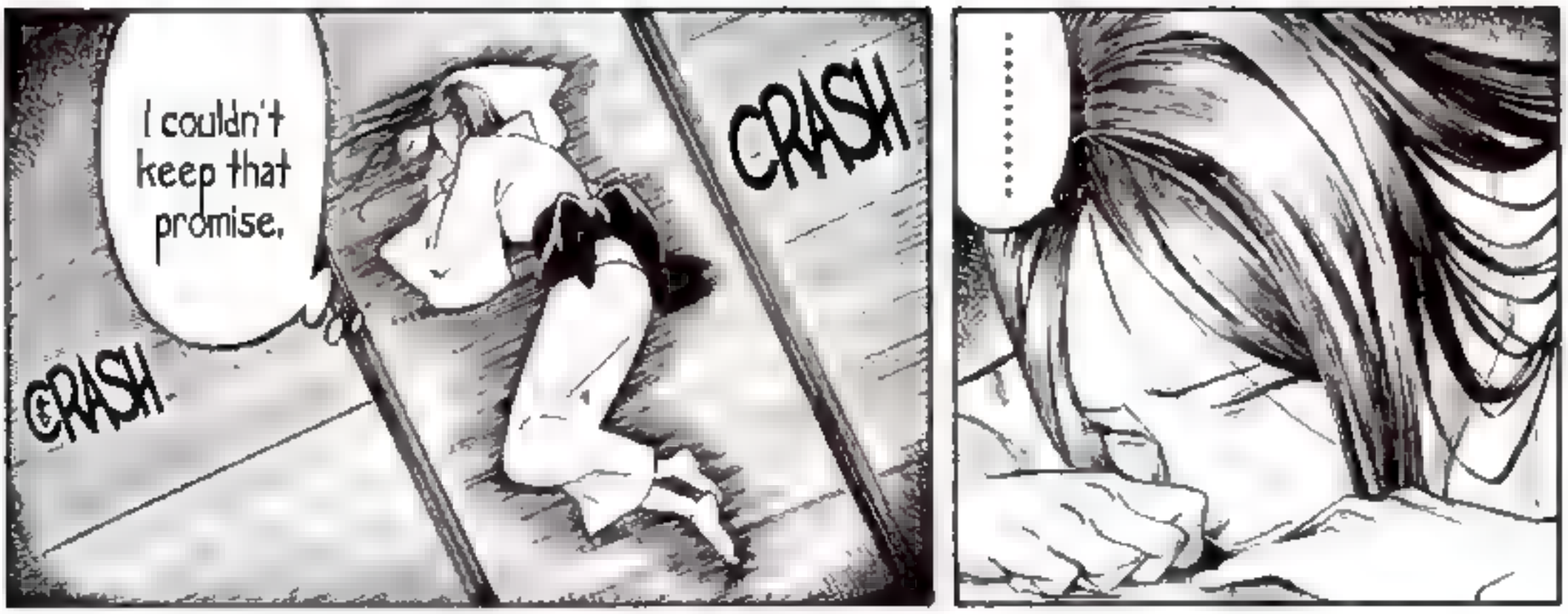
CRASH CRASH


CRASH



YOU SHOULD KILL HIM...
BUT DON'T CUT OFF HIS HEAD.

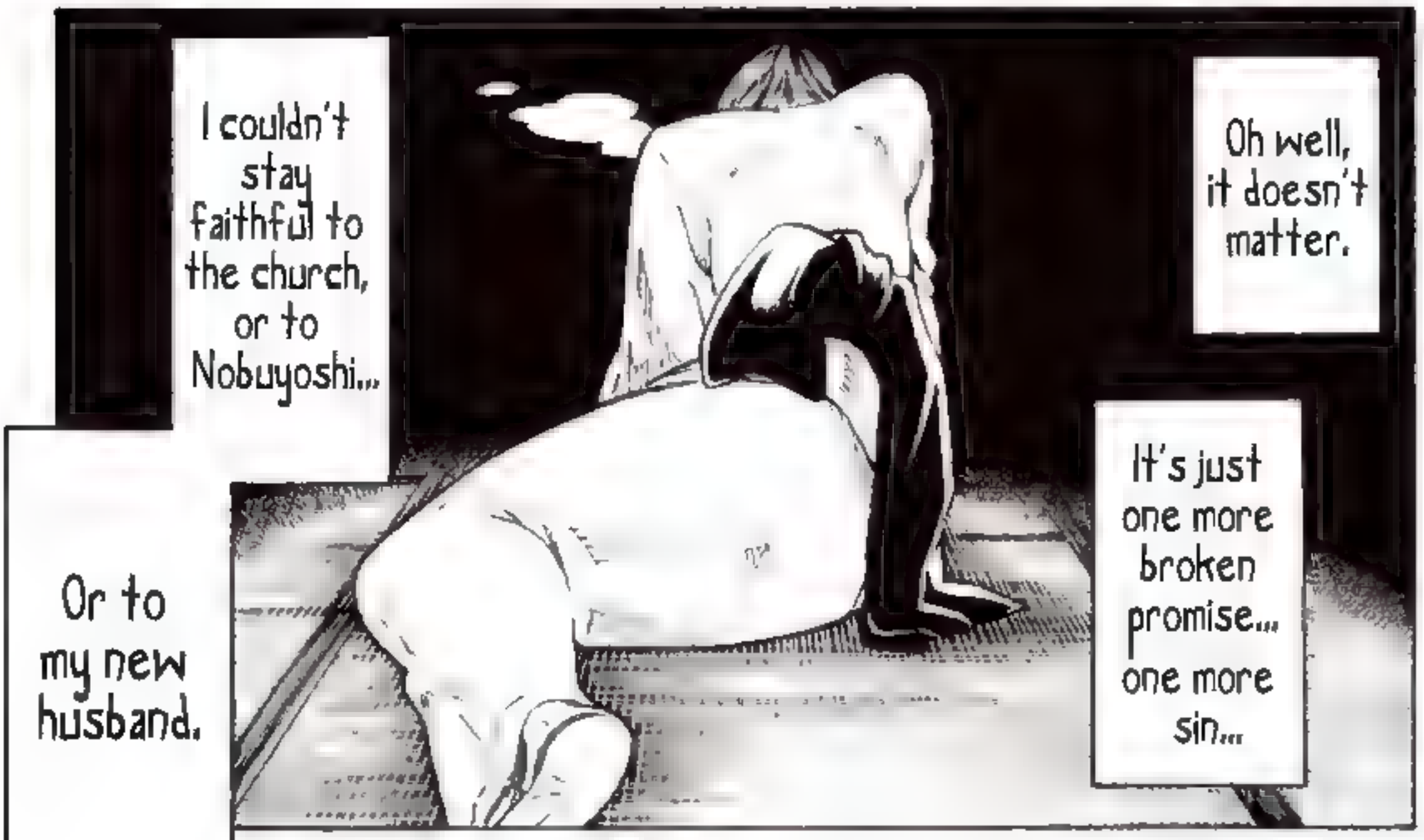
sigh



But Nobuyoshi came back, and I cut off his head again...

I promised....

I promised that man from the church that I wouldn't do it again...


I couldn't stay faithful to the church, or to Nobuyoshi...
Or to my new husband.
Oh well, it doesn't matter.
It's just one more broken promise... one more sin...

But I can't remember what he looked like back then...

I can't remember his face.

It's been years since he rescued me.

I'm sure that he must have more wrinkles and grey hairs now.

How old is my husband?

I wonder ...

Why did I go to that church?

So why...

I was afraid.

I've always had trouble remembering people's faces.

So I've avoided interactions with other people.

What would he do to me in his thirst for revenge?

I was afraid of Nobu-yoshi's ghost.

So I killed him first... just like I did back then.

I was afraid that he would kill me...

I still...

I still don't know who these memories belong to.

NO! GIVE IT BACK!

THAT BELONGS TO ME!!

I WON'T FALL FOR YOUR LIES AGAIN!

NO! IT'S MINE!

PLEASE! I NEED THIS TO SAVE MY FATHER!

SHUT UP!!

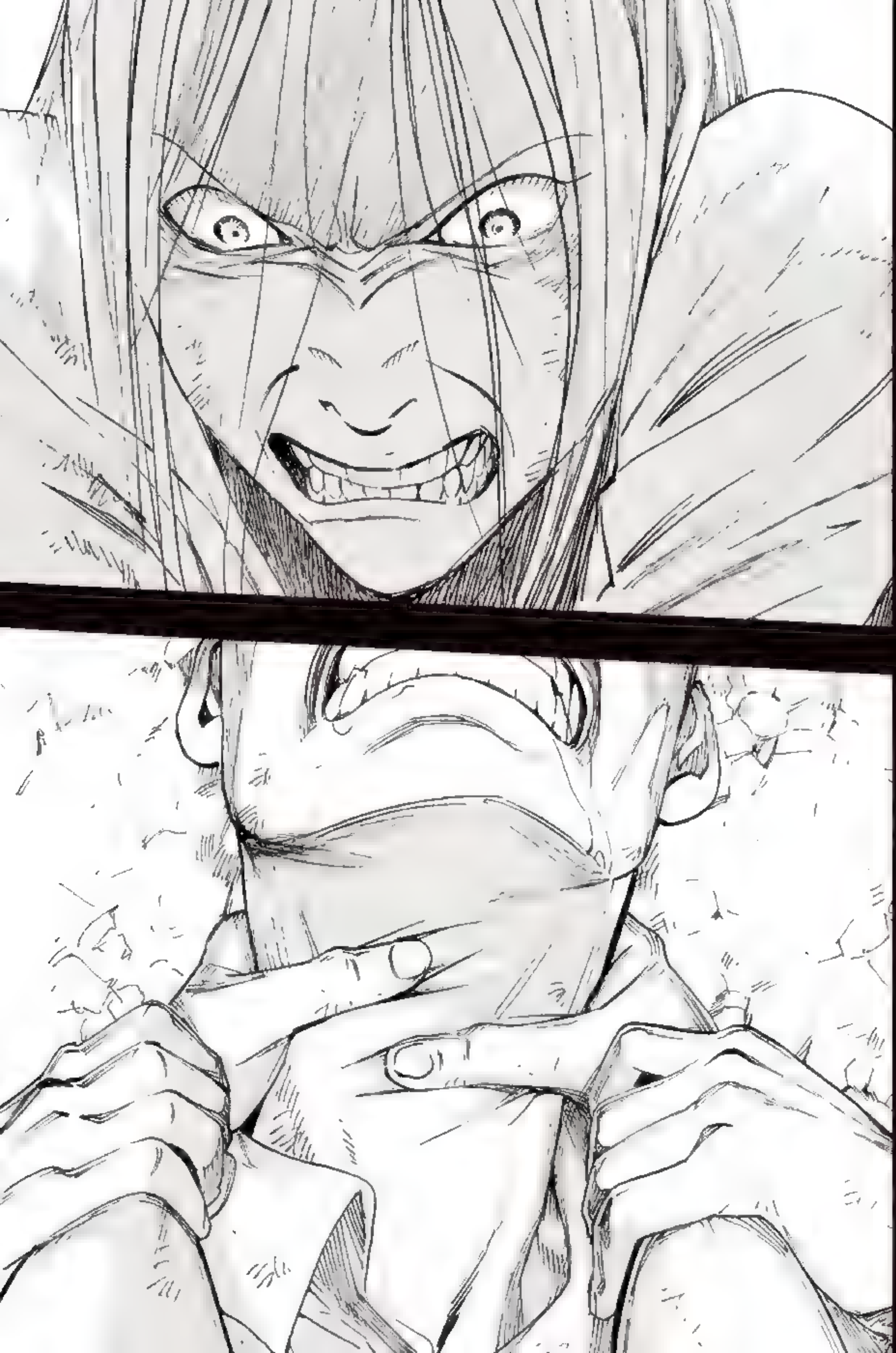
YOU PROMISED ME!

PLEASE! I ONLY RAN AWAY BECAUSE I HAD TO!

GIVE IT TO ME!!

LET ME GO!

GIVE IT TO ME!!



WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT!

IF YOU KILL HIM BUT DON'T CUT OFF HIS HEAD, MAYBE YOU CAN BREAK THE PATTERN.

But why? Why did I cut off Nobuyoshi's head back then?

That day, I went home and planned to throw all of the knives, saws and hatchets into the ocean...

I promised...

.....

CREAK

GASP

SFX: *slash*

AHH!!

AHH!!!!

AHHH!!!

SLASH

AHH!!!!

SLASH

AHH!!!!

SLASH

gasp
gasp
I did it again...
sob
sob
Why...?
sob
ギシギシぁあ…ん
gasp
gasp
gasp

He saw me...

He's...

He's been watching me...

He wasn't with the military police... why was he looking for me?

WELL, IF YOUR HUSBAND IS ALREADY DEAD, THEN KILLING HIM AGAIN ISN'T MURDER, RIGHT?

I need to stop thinking.

The Shinto priest...

Why am I suddenly remembering him now?

But...

But this nightmare keeps happening no matter if I'm awake or asleep...

What if... What if I'm just hallucinating? What if it's all a dream?

CRASH

CRASH

sigh

He hasn't come home since last night... but that's alright.

If anything happens, I can go to Mrs. Ichiyanagi.

This house always gets dark quickly.

The setting sun only shines on my husband's study.

She comes to check on me sometimes... she must be worried about my frail appearance.

AKEMI-SAN, WHAT'S WRONG!?

AHHH

Mrs. Ichiyanagi is my neighbor...

There's a narrow path through the rocks that leads to another house, and she and her husband live there.

She's beautiful and kind.

I can remember the pattern on her kimono, but I can't remember her face...

.....

IT'S ALRIGHT.

YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

AKEMI-SAN, IT'S ALRIGHT!!

I...

I killed him!!

I cut off his head!!

I promised I wouldn't...

CRASH

CRASH

And the ghost that haunts me...

And my memories,

I told her about my past,

But I don't even know why!

It doesn't make sense...

I've cut off my husband's head four times now...

I soon told her everything.

I WONDER WHAT I WOULD DO IF I WERE IN YOUR POSITION.

.....

.....

I don't know what to do...

I just...

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT YOU STILL LOVE HIM?

HM...

AKEMI-SAN, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT NOBU-YOSHI-SAN?

He frightens me.

I loved him when he was alive, but now...

All I feel is fear.

But he's dead...

I...

I've never thought about that.

ISN'T IT A BIT CRUEL TO REJECT HIM?

BUT HE'S COME BACK TO LIFE, HASN'T HE?

HE CAME BACK FOR YOU...

I don't know why I'm driven to cut off his head...

Maybe I'll remember one day...

CRASH

CRASH

.....

CLICK

CLICK

SHIVER

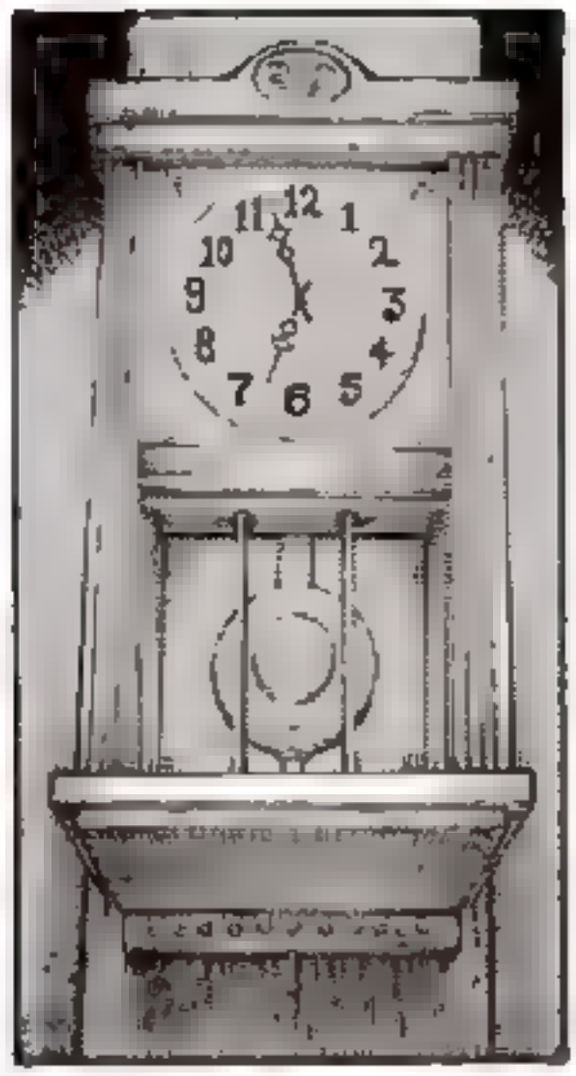
The power is out again...

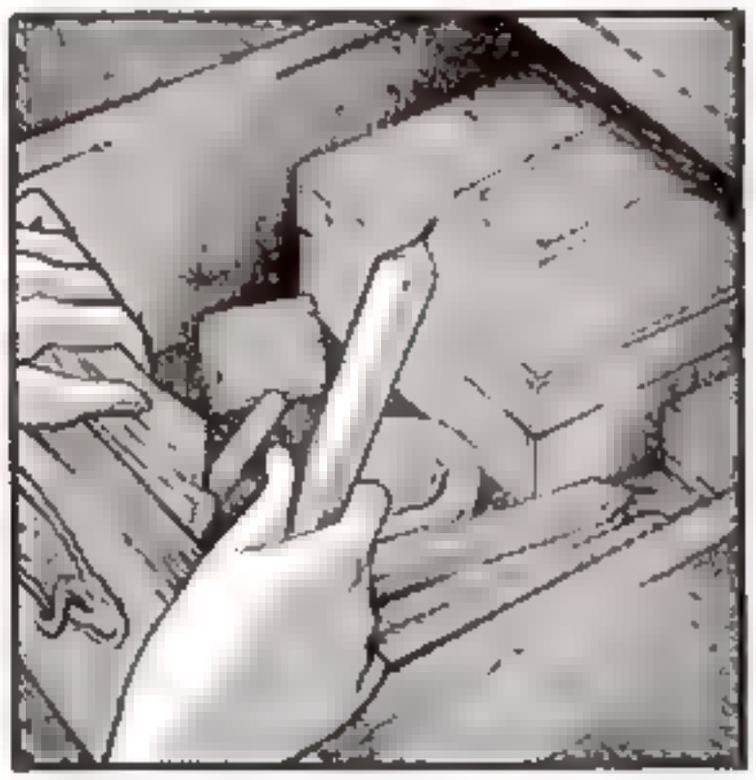
He said he was going to an acquaintance's funeral...

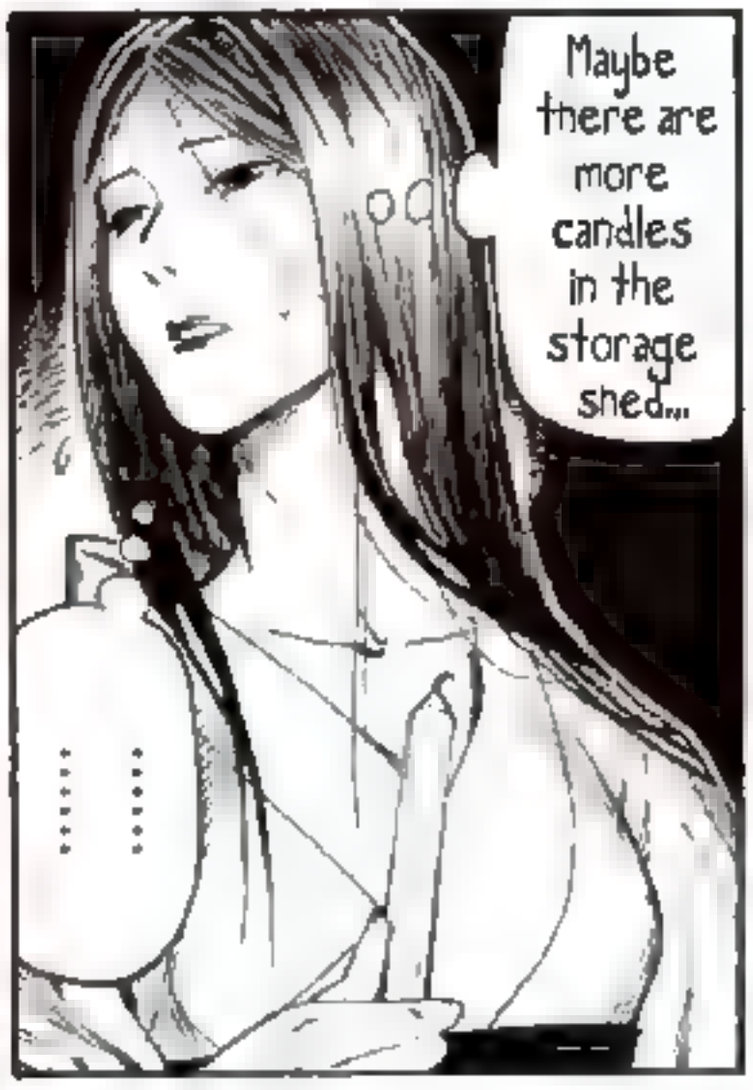
But he left the house at noon yesterday...

It's already getting late...

I wonder if my husband will come home...







gasp

RUSTLE
RUSTLE

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

No!!

It was all a dream!!

That's where I cut off his head...

CREAK

I need more light!!

RATTLE
RATTLE

Ah...

AH !!!

AHH !!!!

That's...

The well...

AHH!!

I threw his body in the well...

Or did I...?

PANIC

PANIC

PANIC

CRAWL

CRAWL

I need to go back inside...

THE TIME HAS COME...

AFTER SEVEN YEARS...

THIS OFFERING WILL BE IMBUED WITH THE POWER OF THE GODS...

THAT SKULL...

IS OUR FAMILY'S GREATEST TREASURE.

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BEGIN YOUR TRAINING.

YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO YOUR FATHER.

EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A GIRL, YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO REACH ENLIGHTEN-MENT.

She'll help me...

I need to find Mrs. Ichiyanagi...

No no no no no!!

gasp

TREMBLE

TREMBLE

gasp

No!!

gasp

GIVE ME BACK MY HEAD!!

SHOUT

SHOUT

No...

No...

Ah...

GASP

CRASH
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH

RATTLE
RATTLE
SHAKE
SHAKE

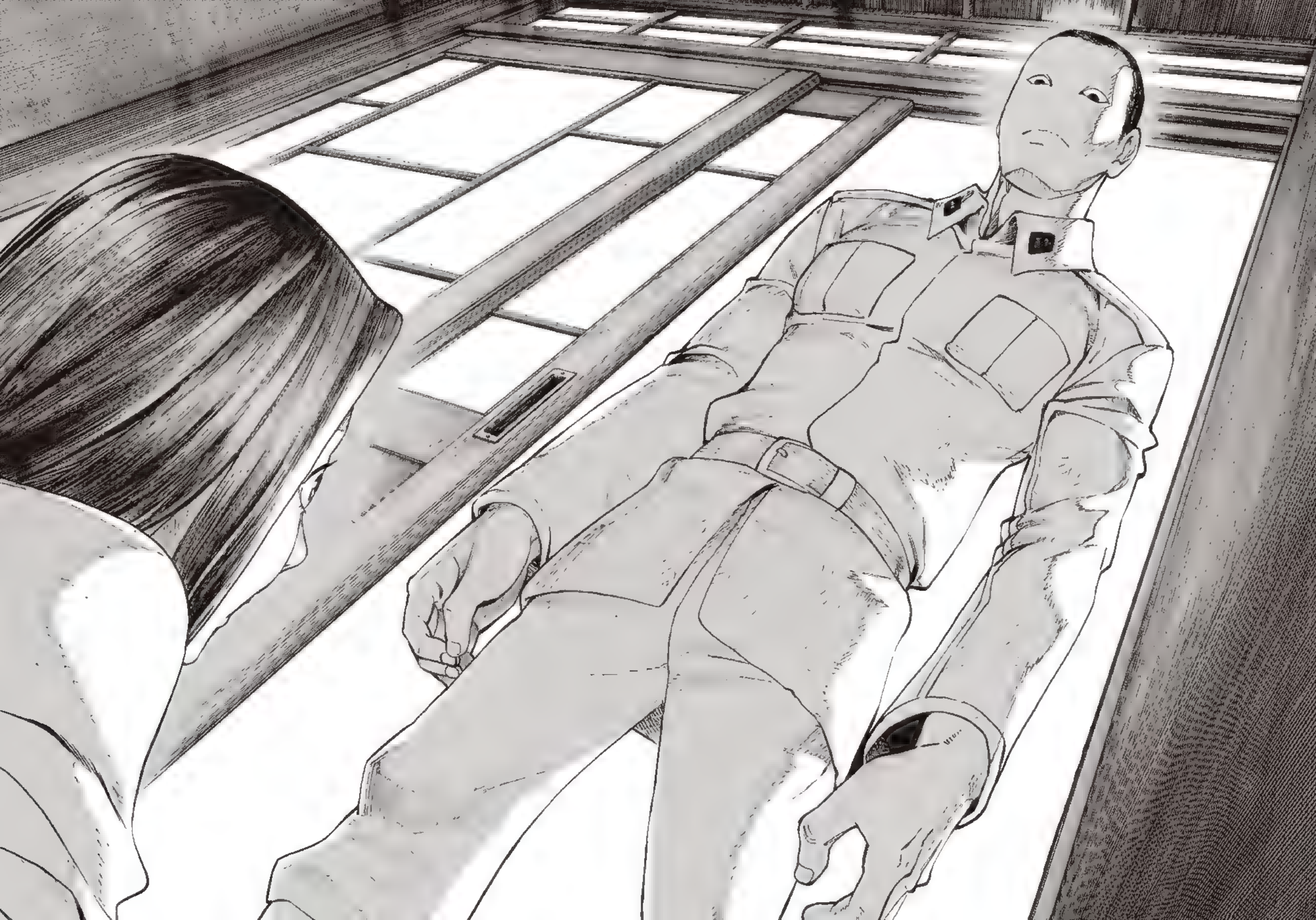
Please, please let it just be the wind...
SOB
SOB
SOB
There's someone banging on the door...

SHAKE
RATTLE

slide

But it was locked...

WERE YOU WAITING FOR ME, AKEMI?



I...

HM?

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

I have to kill him...

AFTER AKEMI LEFT THAT DAY, I HAD AN ANXIETY ATTACK.

I SPENT THE NEXT FOUR DAYS HIDING IN MY ROOM.

I HAD THAT DREAM AGAIN...

BUT THE WOMAN WAS AKEMI...

AND THE MAN HAD... A BEARD?

I'VE BARELY EATEN FOR FIVE DAYS...

MUNCH MUNCH

GULP GULP

UGH ...

GULP GULP

OH, RIGHT.

I SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO RYOU-SAN.

HM...

HE'S NOT HERE...

MAYBE HE'S IN THE BACK GARDEN?

SHOCK

...HEY, RYOU-SAN.

OH... THAT.

ACTU-ALLY, I...

WELL, MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT ME, SO...

THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE.

...HE'S ACTING WEIRD.

ESPE-CIALLY NOT IN A CHURCH.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE INSULTED YOUR FAITH.

YEAH... THE OTHER DAY...

I SAID SOME AWFUL THINGS.

F-FURU-HATA-KUN!?

A-APOL-OGIZE?

YEAH, UM... I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE.

I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING.

IN A... *PROFE-SSIONAL* CAPACITY.

HUH ...?

WHAT'S WRONG?

NO... ACTUALLY, I... I HAVE...

I HAVE A *CON-FESSION* TO MAKE.

A CON-FESSION?

WHAT?